

THE HUDSON REVIEW

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Frontispiece, <i>Jaime de Angulo</i>	TINO TROVA	
<i>Indians in Overalls</i>	JAIME DE ANGULO	327
<i>Poem</i>	JAIME DE ANGULO	378
<i>Over Sir John's Hill</i> (verse)	DYLAN THOMAS	380
<i>The Poetry of Dylan Thomas</i>	DAVID AIVAZ	382
<i>Three Poems</i>	JOSEPH BENNETT	405
<i>The Martyr</i> (verse)	HOWARD O. SACKLER	407
<i>Two Poems</i>	E. STAMBLER	409
<i>English Verse Drama II: The Cocktail Party</i>		
	WILLIAM ARROWSMITH	411
<i>To Aphrodite</i>	JOHN B. EDWARDS	431
<i>Three Provençal Poems</i>	W. S. MERWIN	432

CHRONICLES

<i>Counsel for the Defense</i>	JOSEPH KERMAN	438
<i>Brazilian Modernism</i>	RICHARD M. MORSE	447

REVIEWS

<i>A Discovery</i>	YVOR WINTERS	453
<i>Scientia Bene Modulandi</i>	R. P. BLACKMUR	458
<i>Three Poets</i>	FREDERICK MORGAN	463
<i>What To Do With a Drunken Sailor</i>	SIDNEY MONAS	466
<i>Prophets of Renaissance</i>	HUGH KENNER	474
<i>The Isness of Lawrence</i>	SEYMOUR KRIM	478

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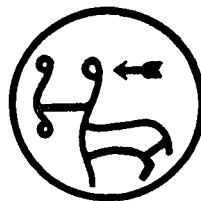
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Indians in Overalls

JAIME DE ANGULO

AVANT-PROPOS

C'est pour vous, Blaise Cendrars, que j'ai écrit ces lignes, parce que je savais que vous comprendriez. Vous qui avez vu tant de choses, tant de pays, tant de monde, vous qui aussi avez connu les indiens, vous qui n'avez peur ni de dieu ni du diable, ni de la vie ni de la mort.

Il n'y a rien, dans l'univers, de merveilleux. Il n'y a rien de caché. Le monde est un grand livre ouvert . . . mais il faut savoir lire, n'est-ce pas? C'est seulement la sottise humaine qui donne naissance au miracle (. . . et même au vol en arrière!!).

Ce qui relie les deux réalités, ce lien entre l'esprit et la matière, ce rapport entre ces deux choses . . . ah! C'est là le grand mystère! . . . comme l'a dit Lao-Sze il y a bien longtemps.

I

A STREET in a little town on the high desert plateau of north-eastern California. Clear air, blue sky, smell of sagebrush, smell of burning juniper wood. I was looking for Jack Folsom, an Indian of the Pit River tribe.

I saw some Paiutes loafing on a corner. I crossed over and asked them if Jack Folsom was in town. They did not answer me.

I strolled along with my hands in my pockets. Then I saw him, standing in front of a store. Same old Jack; squat, broad figure; very dark skin, gray hair; battered hat and brand-new overalls; and the same humorous, quizzical, gray eyes.

"Hallo, Jack."

"Why . . . Doc! Where you been all this time? What you doing here now? Looking for another cattle ranch?"

"No. No more cattle ranches for me. I came back here to study the Indian language."

"What you mean, Doc? You mean you want to learn our talk, Pit River talk? You can't do that, Doc, no use you trying. No

white man can learn our words. There ain't a white man in this whole country can talk Pit River. Some fellows, some cowboys think they do but all they know is a couple dirty words. Now, Modoc, or Paiute, that's easy talk. Why don't you try them? There is quite a few white men around here speak pretty good Paiute. I can talk Paiute, too. But Pit River, that's hard talk, Doc."

"Well, I can try, anyhow. Will you teach me?"

"Sure I will. Where you staying at, Doc?"

"Nowhere. I just got in on the train last night. Where are you living now, Jack?"

"Same old place. That little piece Indian land I got from the Government. I got a shack on it. Good water, I got a well. You been there before, Doc, you remember."

"Oh yes, I remember. Have you still got the same woman?"

"Yes, Lena. Big and fat. She still talks about you. She never knew a white man who was willing to sit down and eat with Indians!"

"Say, Jack, may I stay with you?"

"What you mean, Doc? You can't live with Indians!"

"Why not?"

"What would the white men say? They wouldn't allow you. They wouldn't talk to you. They would think you were a dog like us."

"To hell with the white men. I don't like them either. Will you let me stay with you?"

"Why sure I will! I have known you a long time, Doc. But I ain't got blankets enough . . . unless you want to get in bed with Lena and me, but that woman is too big. Ain't hardly room for me alone."

"That's all right, Jack. I'll go and buy some blankets."

"All right, Doc. Throw them in my wagon. That's my wagon there. I'll go and buy some grub. . . ."

All afternoon we drove through the sagebrush. Strong and pungent smell. Jackrabbits. Sometimes a clump of juniper trees, rough bark, gnarled branches. Wide, wide valley almost like a sea. Barely notice the mountains. Canyons with perpendicular sides and rim-rocks frowning. Jog, jog, jogging team of horses, a bay and a roan, raising the dust. There jumps another jackrabbit. Afternoon changing into sunset. A turn of the road around a

hill. A crazy fence. Open the gate and almost fall with it. "Indian gate!" laughs Jack. Another turn around the hill in the gathering dusk, and there is the shack. Big fat Lena comes to the door. She sees me. She smiles: "Hallo, Doc!" just as if she had known I was coming, just as if I had left only last week. That was Lena. Always took life like that, as it came.

I had bought a tent and I put it up in the moonlight. It was September and already there was a chill to the night. Jack brought a rabbit-skin blanket and spread it on my bed. "Bet you'll need it before morning, Doc. You don't see many of these any more. Indians too lazy now. Takes hundred and fifty, maybe two hundred rabbits. Well, good night."

I scooped a hollow in the ground for my hips and got in under the blankets. I smoked a cigarette and listened to the coyotes howling and yapping out there in the moonlight. After a while the pack moved away into the distance and their bark was very faintly heard. Silence and moonlight through the tent door. I could not sleep. I smoked cigarette after cigarette. . . .

There was not much in that shack, except a few blankets on a pile of tule stalks in a corner. A good deal of the sky could be seen through the roof. There was a cooking stove, but it had no legs and reposed directly on the floor. Lena had removed the legs so that she could squat on the ground while cooking. She felt that was the proper way to cook, just like a campfire. Many Indian women are quite fat, but Lena was a very mountain of flesh, and getting to her feet was a strenuous operation. It surprised me to see how much she could do without raising her fundament from the floor. She could roll over and reach a frying pan six feet away. But "rolling over" does not describe adequately that peculiar motion, besides imparting to it something of the undignified. Have you ever observed in an aquarium an octopus creeping over a rock? It was a little like that. The rolls of flesh seemed to creep over the floor in advancing waves of cotton print, a brown arm uncoiled itself, the frying pan was reached inexorably.

Lena was not always cooking, although she always squatted on the floor. She also did beadwork, stringing beads of different colors in Indian designs, for belts, for hatbands, for tobacco pouches. The mind of a weaver must be a strange sort of mind,

building a picture level after level. From side to side, from left to right, from right to left, it rises all along the line bit by bit. The whole composition has been visualized from the first and no re-touching is possible. I used to wonder what went on in her head when her fat fingers got tired and she sat looking through the open door at the hills beyond. In the afternoons the sun came through the door, an autumn sun already, and the air was clear and bright. Lena spoke very little, and when she did it was in a very low voice, almost a whisper.

Big, placid, silent Lena, and her occasional chuckle. She and Jack got along very well. She was his fourth wife.

I said: "Jack, a while ago you called to me in English. You said 'let's eat.' Now, how would you say that in Indian?"

"*Labam.*"

I wrote it down in my notebook. Then I asked: "Which part in it means 'eat'?"

Jack looked at me with a very puzzled expression on his face. "I dunno what you mean, Doc, what part you eat. . . ."

"All right. . . . Never mind. . . . How do you say 'I eat'?"

"*Saama.*"

"And how do you say 'You eat'?"

"*Kaama.*"

"And how do you say 'He eats'?"

"*Yaama.*"

I thought to myself: Of course! That's what the grammarians call pronominal prefixes. The *s* . . . , *k* . . . , and *y* . . . , stand for the pronouns, I, you, he. I felt very proud of myself. I was getting along fine. "And now, Jack, how do you say 'We eat'?"

"How many of us eat, Doc?"

"What's that got to do with it? If I say 'we' I mean more than one. That's what we call singular and plural."

"I dunno what you call 'em things. I never went to school. But in Pit River talk it makes a lot of difference whether it's one man, or two people, or more than two people. For instance, you and me sit here, and here comes another fellow, and he says: 'You fellows eat already?' Well, we answer in Indian: *Sabaama*. That means: 'Yes, we two eat already.' But if we had been more than two, like for instance you and me and Lena, then we would say:

Sabammiima. 'Yes, we all eat already.' Just like you say to a fellow if you invite him to eat: *Tamma*. That means: 'You, eat!' But if you are talking to two people you say: *Dzamm*. And if it's more than two you say: *Dzamma*. Savvy now, Doc?"

I was jubilant. "Why yes, Jack. It's what they call the dual. That's the way it is in Greek!" Jack had a very kind face, and it was now wreathed in smiles. He evidently felt very proud of the Greeks. He said: "Well, well. What do you think of that now! I always thought them Greeks were nice people."

I was astounded. "What do you know about the Greeks, Jack?"

"They was a couple of them had a restaurant here a while back. I used to listen to their talk but I couldn't get a word of it, although I know some Mexican too. I didn't know they talk like us."

Jack got up from the log where we had been sitting. "Let's go and hunt some rabbits, Doc." He went into the shack and came out again with his shotgun, and we wandered out into the tall sagebrush. "When I was a little boy I used to hunt them with bow and arrow. That's a long time ago, when I was a little boy. . . ." "How old are you, Jack?" "I dunno, Doc. Old-time Indians don't know their age. I'll tell you though, and mebbe you can figure it out. I remember I was a young man able to ride a horse at the time of the Modoc War. I was one of the first boys had the nerve to ride a horse. The old people were still afraid of them. That's why old man Folsom kind of adopted me. He was a white man. Him and his wife didn't have any children, and so they raised me like their own child. They were about the first white people to settle around here. When they died and I went back to my own people I felt like a stranger for a long time."

"Say, Doc, I want you to write a letter for me. It's to Jack Spring. You remember him, at Hot Spring, what we call Astaghiwa. . . . Well, tell him I got his colt ready. Tell him come and get him and don't let any them young Indians make him buck for fun because he'll be a spoilt horse before you know. . . . And tell him a Paiute boy shot old Blind Hall, you know, the old Indian doctor, over at Big Meadows last week on account old Hall poisoned his relations. He fired six shots point-blank but it didn't hurt him at all because he was not there. Old Hall laughed

like hell about it. Said his medicine, Raven, warned him that Paiute boy was coming, so he went away and left his shadow there and the Paiute emptied his gun at it. . . . And tell him if he has got a rawhide to save it for me because I got an order for hackamores and quirts, and I am short of strings, and I'll pay him for it. . . . And tell him that old Bob Chief at Tulukupi is pretty sick and maybe he is going to die and we know who poisoned him, but we got some doctors on our side too. . . . Well, that's all I guess, and tell him take care of himself."

I wandered around in the sagebrush. I was thinking about this Pit River language. I could see already that it was going to be a very difficult language to study, a very complex language, structurally complex. And yet the Pit River Indians were accounted one of the most primitive tribes among the California Indians, extremely primitive, just about at the level of the Stone Age in culture. And so I wondered . . . Could it be that there was no relation between language and culture?

"I was born in an old-time Indian house, Doc. There ain't any more that kind left, old-time Indian houses. Nowadays Indian people live in houses like the white people. But that's no good because their houses are not well built like the houses of the white men. Indians' houses is nothing but shacks full of drafts and holes in the roof. Why! some of them is just made out of tin cans, you must have seen them by the railroad track in town, what they call Indiantown. This is awful cold country in winter, snow, blizzard, wind blows through. Indians catch cold and die. And we didn't wear clothes in them days and so everybody was tough and healthy. But now the Indians can't stand the cold weather any better than a white man, and even worse. We are all going to die. . . .

"The old-time Indian house, that's what we call *astsuy*. Now, I bet you can't say that word right, Doc." I tried and Jack laughed. "No, you didn't say 'house,' you said 'winter.' Them two words is pretty much alike, ain't they, *astsuy* and *astsuy*. One means 'house' and the other means 'winter' but the white people never can tell the difference."

"Where does the difference come in, Jack?"

"I dunno, Doc, I couldn't tell you, but they sound different to me. Any Indian will tell you they are different: *astsuy*, *astsuy*."

I repeated after him again and again, and he laughed and laughed. Finally I caught on: it was a question of tone, pitch-tone: *astsūy* and *astsuy*. There are two tones in Pit River, high tone and low tone. Every syllable of every word is in either high or low tone, the difference being about a musical fourth (as from *do* to *fa*). Of course the Indians themselves do not realize it any more than the average white man is aware of stress-accent in his own language. But it is an essential part of the Pit River grammar.

In the old days the Pit River Indians did not live in individual houses. In summertime they camped around in the hills and the valleys, here and there, moving about in small groups somewhat like our own families, fishing, hunting, gathering crops of roots and seeds, and practicing conscientiously a lot of good healthy loafing. In the fall, when the nights were getting sharp and the mule-deer were turning red, all these wandering small families returned home, converging from the hills, from the higher valleys and swales, down the canyons, through the juniper, through the forests of tall pine, down to the sagebrush flats, all trekking home to some wintering ground, at Astaghiwa where there is a spring of hot water, at Tapaslu where the valley ends in a cul-de-sac, at Dalmo'ma where there are lots of wild turnips, to all the wintering grounds, there to dig themselves in for the coming winter and snow and blizzards and days of calm with the sun shining bright and the air cracking with frost.

You can imagine them, straggling home, the men usually stark naked, or some with a loin-cloth or a G-string; the women wore a kind of apron or hula-skirt of reeds; they carried their burdens on their backs from tump-lines from the forehead or from above the breast, both men and women, for there was not much division of labor among these Indians, except that the men did all the hunting with bow and arrows; they all wore their hair long and often coiled it in a chignon and stuck a long wooden pin to hold it in place. There they come down the trail in single file, grunting under their packs, squat bodies with broad shoulders, skins of chocolate—although many are tall and lithe, like the Paiutes of the Nevada desert with whom they intermarried much. There are

not many children because only the most sturdy and the most lucky can survive.

And now, from everywhere around they arrive at the winter grounds, one family today, another the next, and another, and another. Here's old Red Tracks and his people: that young woman there she is related to me, and who is that young fellow, seems to me I have seen him somewhere. I don't think he is a relation of mine, oh! and look at the woman of Stalks-in-the-reeds, she is packing a new baby. . . . "*Is kaadzi! Is kaakaadzi!* Man, you are living! Man, you are living! We got here five days ago. . . . Where is Standing-alone?" "Oh, he left us, said he was going to winter at Hanti'u, he has relations there. Has the old Blind Chief arrived?" "No, but there are four, five chiefs here already. . . ."

There would be forty, fifty, sixty people, wintering at one place, all of them living together, living on top of each other, in one big communal house, a kind of underground cave. That was the *astsuy*, no, I mean the *astsūy*.

I should have given a great deal to be able to spend some time in one of those old-time winter houses, and see just exactly how did life go on, get a real feeling of their social organization, their family life, their kinship system. All these are just words. I had read them in books on anthropology, but they were just labels, dried specimens, lifeless.

I had always wanted to live with really primitive people, real Stone Age men, and see how they thought, and felt. I had read books on primitive psychology, some of them excellent books like Lévy-Brühl's (who, by the way, never left Paris, or so I have been told), but I wasn't convinced. All that was too theoretical.

Really primitive people, not like the already cultured Indians of the Southwest with their sun-worship, their secret societies, their esoteric ceremonials. But real Stone Age men. . . . Well, these had been it, until a very short time ago. Here was Jack Folsom who was a little boy when the first white men arrived. Was there anything left? How much had they changed? My God, think of it, to pass in one lifetime from the stone axe to wireless telegraphy! Indians in overalls; no, there was nothing picturesque about these Indians, no feather headdresses or beaded moccasins, nothing to delight the tourists about these "digger Indians" in

their battered hats and cheap calicos, picking the offal of the whites on the garbage dumps at the edge of town. My Indians in overalls! . . .

Jack said he had to go away for a while, had to go after a horse of his. He owned several good fast horses, which he raced sometimes, and made a little money that way. (The Indians had to live somehow or other—they had received a few pieces of land, here and there, from the Government, mostly rocky spots without water, useless—in the summer's haying time they could make a few bucks working for the white ranchers—the rest of the time, who in the hell cared? The sons-of-bitches were no good, liars and thieves, let them all die.) He said he would be back in a week or two. So, after he left with Lena and the spring-wagon, I saddled the remaining horse, tied my blankets behind the saddle, and went off for a jaunt.

I followed the Pit River downstream, stopped at Canby to buy a can of beans and some bacon at the store (Canby at that time consisted of one store, one blacksmith shop, and three other houses). The fellow there recognized me. "Say, ain't you Buckaroo Doc? Well, I'll be darned! Where've you been? Remember that time you rode to the show and you didn't have no pants on, nothing but a mackinaw and your chaps and spurs, and you walked onto the stage with a bottle of whiskey by mistake, and for a while everybody thought you were one of the actors? We still laugh about it around here. What are you doing now? I thought you had left and gone to the lower country . . ." etc., etc.

I went on down, and camped that night in a clump of junipers. Next day I came out of the hills into the Big Valley (*wa'wa atwam* of the Indians). I passed a little bit of a town called Bieber. Again I bought some grub at the store. The people there seemed to be half-witted and I had a hard time to make myself understood. All the whites in that part of the country are slow, uncouth pioneers. At least they were, at that time.

I went on. It was getting dark and I was looking for a place to camp. Then, not far from the road, I saw a fire burning and some people camping under a big tall pine. I went over, and that's how I made the acquaintance of Sukmit, alias Frank Martin, also known as Bieber Frank, also as "that crazy hunchback

Indian doctor," who later became my inseparable companion—(how many ditches have we shared for a bed with a bottle of fire-water?!). Crazy as they come, long powerful arms, one eye gone, the other malicious, an enormous leering mouth with a few teeth here and there. He was a young man in his thirties.

"Hallo, can I camp here?"

"Sure! Why not? This is my land, Indian land, I am not like white man, I let everybody stay on me. Everybody welcome. I am Indian doctor. Where you come from? Where you going? Sit down here with us. I bet you never eat acorn-mush before. Taste better with salt. Old-time Indians didn't have salt. You eat salt and it give you sore eyes."

He turned to an old fat woman and started to talk fast in Pit River. They spoke much more clearly than Jack Folsom. Again I noticed the same curious singsong of high and low tones, of long and short syllables, like a Morse code. And what harsh gutturals! These two seemed to be always shouting at the top of their voices, like Spaniards (in fact, most Pit Rivers do). There was also another Indian woman sitting by the fire. She was little and scrawny, and she didn't say anything. Sukmit pointed to her and said: "He is my uncle. He don't speak white language. I ain't got hay for your horse. Will he stand staking?"

The acorn-mush tasted like pea-soup, more or less. There were also fried potatoes, but I had never eaten potatoes fried just like that, sort of parboiled in grease in a slow skillet. I found them revolting but ate them to be polite. Sukmit kept on talking and boasting. Once in a while, his mother, the fat woman, would stop poking the fire, look at him and say in English: "Oh, you are crazy." "She says I am crazy because I am a doctor, all Indian doctors are crazy." The other woman, the "uncle," did not say anything. She never did. She died two years later.

The old lady, however, I mean Sukmit's mother, was very active. Active, that is, with her mouth. Her backside never moved from the ground. From there she carried on a never-ending battle with her son. She stirred the mush while he went on ranting about his powers as a medicine-man, and every once in a while she would ejaculate the "Oh, you are crazy!" and there would be a short skirmish in shouted Pit River. She had a broad face, dark chocolate, and her eyes had already the thin veil of cataract. She was always gay and laughed a good deal.

Another woman appeared in the firelight. They said her name was Kate Gordon and she had married three husbands, all of them white men. "I like white men," she said, "they treat me fine. Give me plenty grub, lots clothes. . . . You want to marry me, white man?" I said no, I was already married. She was a handsome old girl, with gray hair and fiery eyes. She was evidently manic. (I have found that type, the manic, quite frequently among the Pit Rivers.)

There was something very friendly and warm about Sukmit, in spite of his shouting and boasting, something childlike. I had always thought of medicine-men as old and crafty. As I have said, Sukmit was in his thirties. He had a very keen sense of humor and was forever joking. But one felt a strange sadness, a wistfulness, underneath it all, and oftentimes he dropped into a reverie and went on with his work (for he was very active—always doing something, sawing wood, repairing his car, this, that) like an automaton.

I have seen other Indians, and many white men too, who often drop into this trancelike automatism. Fantasy is an active occupation of the mind which demands concentration, a narrowing of the consciousness to a focus. Some people can do it sitting down with their chin in their hand, but not your extrovert with his too much thyroid; hence that automaton-like activity—but the mind is a million miles away. Sukmit had a drag-saw for cutting logs, operated by a small engine and a dry battery (at least he said it was; I don't know much about machinery and care less; like Sukmit's mother I was born before the days of the machine). The old lady felt a great admiration for her son, and a little distrust. I shared both attitudes.

Sukmit was a better informant than Jack, linguistically. By this time I had discovered that there were six modes in the Pit River verb: indicative, subjunctive, interrogative, volitional present or future, and optative (Oh, those so-simple languages of the primitive peoples!); but it was impossible to make Jack stick to one mode. In giving me a paradigm (I eat, you eat, he eats . . . etc.), he would jump from one mode to another. Not so with Sukmit; once started on one mode he followed it rigidly. The old lady was a different type again; she wasn't going to follow any paradigms. She changed from one verb to another if she thought it was more interesting—on the other hand, she was excellent at

dissecting a long periphrastic form into its component parts. I would exclaim "Oh . . . I see . . ." and she would chuckle: "Ha . . . ha . . . ha . . . you white man!" When she chuckled, her belly also chuckled.

Sukmit and his mother were forever quarreling, usually in Pit River, but sometimes in English for my edification. At first it worried me but after a while I paid no more attention to it than to the breeze. The old lady had been born in an old-time Indian house. She described it to me in detail, and even made me a little model of it one day with sticks and bits of mud. She was very keen at explaining to me many apparently meaningless details, which become quite important when you consider the realities of life, and the necessities of a materially primitive culture. She had been born and reared in such a culture and had an artist's eye for the significant differences. For instance she was explaining to me that there was no door in the communal winter house (which was really a sort of cave or cellar dug out of the ground and roofed over with sod)—people went in or out through the smoke-hole by climbing a stepladder set up against the center-post. But at one end of the house there was a tunnel that led out to the outside ground, like a rabbit warren. This was for purposes of ventilation, of establishing a draft of air into and through the crowded house and out through the smoke-hole. The chiefs, the important men, usually sat or lay there on their backs, smoking their stone-pipes and enjoying the fresh air (forty or fifty humans including babies can make a thick atmosphere!). Now, mothers and fathers climbed the ladder with small children in their arms, or on the hip, or strapped to the cradle-board; but bigger youngsters crawled out through the rabbit warren; and the chiefs would grab them, and hug them, and tease them, as grownups do the world over. Such a description put the whole picture in focus for me. And again the old lady (who had a pornographic mind) would say: ". . . the smoke-hole pretty big—have to step across, grab pole—young girl take time step across show everything. . . . Ha, ha, ha! . . . you white man, ha, ha, ha! . . ."

The old lady Gordon, she of the gray hair and fiery eyes, was a very different type. As we were sitting by the campfire she told me of the wars they had with the Paiutes and the Modocs. It seems that the Indians liked to meet in two enemy lines facing each

other and shoot with bow and arrow. Each woman stood behind her man, holding onto his belt, and passed the arrows to his hand. After the fight they danced to placate the shadows of the dead. They strung the ears on an arrow shaft and held them to the fire and chanted. Old Gordon took a stick and held it to the fire and chanted in a deep contralto. It was weird and made me shiver. For once, Sukmit was silent but old Mary had to break the silence and chuckle: "... Ha, ha, ha ... you white man ..."

I only stayed a few days with Sukmit and his people, that time. One morning he started to move camp, piling things into his decrepit automobile, and I saddled my horse. But his departure was in the grand manner. I must explain that Indians' cars, in those days, were of the "tin lizzie" type, held together with bale-wire. This was before the days of the self-starter—and cranking the engine was a back-breaking and discouraging task. Indians had discovered a very good way to start the engine: prop up the hind end of the car with a jack, then start the engine by spinning the rear wheels, then kick off the jack, run after the car as it zig-zagged through the sagebrush, climb in at the back, and grab the steering wheel. Very good, but hard for Sukmit the hunchback. That morning, there was a heated discussion between him and the old lady. He wanted her to sit at the wheel and steer the car while he started it Indian fashion. But she would have none of it. He argued and argued that it was easy, very easy. But she was obdurate. Finally he yelled: "Get in, Christ Almighty, do you want to live forever?"

I started back along the Pit River toward the Hot Springs. I saw a dilapidated shack and went in. There was an Indian girl in there. She was tattooing her wrist with an indelible pencil and a sewing needle. She sat in a chair by the window, pricking, pricking. She was tattooing two initials on her left wrist: B. H. Her face was fat, commonplace, and unreadable. She wore a yellow dress and her legs popped out of tight laced high-heeled shoes. She sat by the window, pricking and mixing blood and indelible pencil into B. H. She was through with the B and was starting on the H. Through the window one saw the flats of sagebrush and gnarled juniper trees, and in the distance Wadaqtsuudzi the big mountain where there is a lake on top and men go there

who are seeking power. As I went out of the room I noticed an iron bedstead. It was held together by a pair of pink corsets laced from one post to the other. On a dressing-table a box of Jonteel face powder. I was thinking of that old woman who gave me wild turnips to eat at Sukmit's camp, she of the gray hair and burning eyes, who sang the chant for appeasing the dead enemies. She had the traditional tattoo lines on the chin. How she cursed the Modocs! They had killed her father and taken her mother captive. She also taught me a war-song, a monotonous kind of wail. She said her mother used to sing it when they were alone, and she would cry.

I had gone into that house looking for an old fellow named Blind Hall, or Johnny Hall (his name, I found out later, was Tahteumi, meaning "red trail," or "red track," or "sunset trail"). They had told me he was one of the most powerful medicine-men around. But the tattooing girl said he wasn't there; this was his house, but he had gone to another camp. She said he was sick. "He was going to town the other day with his old woman; they were driving along in their old buggy; automobile come from behind; upset buggy; old Hall didn't know he was hurt, but he must have dropped his shadow; he went on to Hantiyu, but he got pretty sick; he is coming back today; he is going to doctor himself tonight."

That sounded interesting. I though I would hang around. Maybe I would learn something. So I wandered around. About noon Blind Hall arrived in the old rattling creaking swaying buggy with his old woman and the old old decrepit horse. I knew right away I had seen him before somewhere, sometime; that massive face, the sightless eyes, the very thick lips and quite a lot of white beard for an Indian. "Hallo, white man, I remember you, you stop once, we camp side road, you give me can beans, bacon, you eat with us, you treat me good, you all right, I remember you, I remember your voice—I am pretty sick now, dropped my shadow on the road, can't live without my shadow, maybe I die. dunno. . . . I doctor myself tonight. You stay, you help sing tonight."

Blind Hall called his medicine "my poison." The indian word is *damaagome*. Some Indians translate it in English as "medicine,"

or "power," sometimes "dog" (in the sense of pet dog, or trained dog). Blind Hall was not boastful like Sukmit; he was full of quiet dignity; as to his age, goodness knows, he said he and Jack Folsom were young men together, and once they got mad at each other: "I called him by his name and he called me by my name" (you are not supposed to call an Indian by his personal name; that's too personal, too private; you call him by his term of relationship to you—uncle, grandfather, brother-in-law, or whatever—or by his nickname).

Blind Hall was groaning and bellyaching about the pain in his ribs. We were sitting in the sun. "Give me a cigarette, white man. Mebbe I die. I dunno. That autocar he knock my shadow out of me; shadow he stay on the road now can't find me; can't live without my shadow! . . . It's too bad, mebbe I die . . . tonight I doctor myself, I ask my poisons . . . I got several poisons . . . I got Raven, he live on top mountain Wadaqtsuudzi, he know everything, watch everything. . . . I got Bullsnake, he pretty good too. . . . I got Louse, Crablouse, live with people, much friends, he tell me lots things. . . . I got Jim Lizard, he sit on rock all day, he pretty clever but not serious, he dam liar. . . . Sometime I doctor sick man, call my poisons come over my head, they fight, Raven he says that man poisoned, Bullsnake say no he not poisoned, he broke rule hunting . . . and then this here Jim Lizard he say, Oh! let's go home that man going to die anyhow! . . . Then Raven he shake his finger at him he say: Who ask you what you think? Why don't you help our father?" (The poisons call the medicine-man "my father," *ittu ai*—the medicine-man calls his poison *ittu damaagome* "my *damaagome*," or whatever you want to translate that word by: medicine, poison, power. . . .) "You can go home if you want to, we will stay here and help our father. Then Jim Lizard mebbe he stay and help and mebbe he tell me lie. I can't depend on him. . . . Ohh . . . it hurt me inside here. Maybe I die. Everybody die sometime. . . . I ask my poison tonight. You white man, you help, you sing too. More people sing more good. Sometime my poison very far away, not hear. Lots people sing, he hear better."

At this place of Astaghiwa (meaning "hot being," because there is a hot spring) there also lived Robert Spring (he took

the name from the spring—but his brother was Jim Bailey, and why?? but Jim Bailey was the son of Blind Hall's woman, but Blind Hall was not his father. . . . Indian relationships are very complex, and the adoption of white men's names does not simplify things). This Robert Spring was a very quiet individual, very shy, about thirty or thirty-five years old, well set up, spoke English fairly well. He asked me to show him how he could write his own language: "I been to school at Fort Bidwell; I can write English; I try write our language but can't do it. Yet you do it. Will you show me?" It was interesting to see that he was aware of the differences due to tones, but of course he had no idea of arranging tones in a sequence or scale. And *my* conception of a tone as "low" and another as "high" was extremely puzzling to him. "Why don't you say that one is to the right and the other to the left?" he asked. I had no answer, of course.

We were sitting on a log. He said: "Goddammit! an Indian camp is always dirty. . . . Look at that!" In truth it was pretty messy: broken wagon-wheels askew against a juniper trunk. A couple of shacks made of boards and flattened tin cans for roof. A tent. Piles of ashes, old campfires. Tin cans, tin cans, tin cans. A broken coffee-pot—but a beautiful panoramic view. Undulations of sagebrush and the distant mountains all around. This is a country of vast distances. That does not look like such a big hill over there . . . but it rises three thousand feet and it is about fifteen miles from here. Very fooling, this clear atmosphere.

A buggy rattled in. There were two old Indians in it, a man and a woman. "That's Hantiyu Bill. You wouldn't think so but that fellow is pretty old. He got that woman as a present. They used to do that in the old days sometimes. Her father and Bill were great friends and he gave the woman to him."

I asked him about that "shadow" that Blind Hall had lost. "That's what we call the *de'lamdzi*," he said. "Does that mean 'shadow,' like the shadow of a tree? Or does it mean shadow like what the white people call the 'soul'?" "I dunno about that last word, how you pronounce it? I have heard the white people talk about it but I don't understand what it means. But the shadow from a tree, that's different. That's *dalilamdzi*. Yes, they sound

very much the same, don't they? I never noticed that before, *de'lamdzi, dalilamdzi*. . . ."¹

His mother, old Hall's woman, passes by. She is going to dig for roots, on the flats. Little old woman, all wrinkles, bent over under her conical pack-basket, tottering away with the help of her digging stick. She is eternally mumbling something. Once in a while she pokes into the ground, bends over, pulls a wild turnip and throws it over her shoulder into the pack-basket on her back. She looks very small in all that vastness of landscape. Robert Spring watches her and smiles: "See, she thinks she is helping. Old people are like that."

Robert Spring had a good ear; he would have been an excellent phonetician. He made me notice the difference between *diboomi* "to run," and *dibommi* "the wind." A question of length: in one the vowel is long; in the other it is the consonant which is long. Quantity is as important in this language as it is in Latin prosody.

That evening we all gathered at sundown. Jack Steel, an Indian from Hantiyu who usually acted as Blind Hall's "interpreter," had arrived. He went out a little way into the sagebrush and called the poisons. "Raven, you, my poison, COME! (*qaq, mi, ittu damaagome, tunnoo*). . . . Bull-snake, my poison, come. . . . Crab-louse, my poison, cooome. . . . You all, my poisons, COOOOME!!" It was kind of weird, this man out in the sagebrush calling and calling for the poisons, just like a farmer calling his cows home.

We all gathered around the fire; some were sitting on the ground, some were lying on their side. Blind Hall began singing one of his medicine-songs. Two or three who knew that song well joined him. Others hummed for a while before catching on. Robert Spring said to me: "Come on, sing. Don't be afraid. Everybody must help." At that time I had not yet learned to sing Indian fashion. The melody puzzled me. But I joined in, bashfully

¹I found out later that *de'lamdzi* is a noun, while *dalilamdzi* is a verb. Thus:
salilamdzi—I make a shadow (on the ground)
ittu dalilamdzi—my shadow (on the ground)
ittu de'lamdzi—my shadow (in the sense of soul)

Compare Latin "*anima*," a current of air, wind, breath, vital principle. The etymology of Anglo-Saxon "soul" is unknown.

at first, then when I realized that nobody was paying any attention to me, with gusto.

Blind Hall had soon stopped singing, himself. He had dropped into a sort of brown study, or as if he were listening to something inside his belly. Suddenly he clapped his hands, the singing stopped abruptly. In the silence he shouted something which the "interpreter," Jack Steel, repeated. And before Jack Steel was through, Blind Hall was shouting again, which the interpreter also repeated, and so on, five or six times. It was not an exchange between Blind Hall and Jack Steel. Jack Steel was simply repeating word for word what Blind Hall was shouting. It was an exchange between Hall and his poison, Raven. First, Hall would shout a query which the interpreter repeated; then Hall would listen to what Raven (hovering unseen above our heads) was answering—and he would repeat that answer of Raven which he, Hall, had heard in his mind—and the interpreter would repeat the repetition. Then Hall emitted a sort of grunted "Aaaah . . .," and relapsed into a brown study. Everybody else, Jack Steel included, relaxed. Some lit cigarettes; others gossiped. A woman said to me: "You did pretty good; you help; that's good!" Robert Spring said: "Sure, everybody must help. Sometimes the poisons are far away. They don't hear. Everybody must sing together to wake them up."

The woman who had praised me for singing said for my benefit: "He ask his Raven if he going to die. Raven say he don't know; ask the others." Blind Hall started humming another medicine-song, and everything went on like before. That way four or five times. At one time he got pretty excited and started to jump and dance, and fell down. It must be hell to be blind.

The whole performance lasted about a couple of hours. Then everybody dispersed.

The next morning Blind Hall felt much better. I asked Robert Spring about the "interpreter." They call it *astumage*, which literally means translating or interpreting. According to Spring the medicine-man gets so excited that his speech often becomes quite unintelligible; but his interpreter is used to it and able to repeat it clearly. Quite so; he evidently performs that function. But I suspect something else, not so visible: the shaman is in a great state of excitement, it borders on hysteria, even catalepsy sometimes; it seems to me that it would be pretty easy for the shaman

to slip into the autistic stage of schizophrenia . . . and never come back to reality! Is it not possible, perhaps, that the interpreter acts as a link, a life-line by which the shaman remains in contact with the reality of the material world?

Blind Hall was so pleased with my "helping" that he offered to make me some moccasins if I got him a piece of buckskin. Poor old blind fellow! *Some* moccasins!! They might have fitted the foot of a dinosaur, or some such beast, but not a human foot. However I assured him they fitted my feet like gloves and he was very proud.

It was Robert Spring who first made me understand about the *dinibowi*. "That's what we Indians call *luck*. A man has got to have luck, no matter for what, whether it's for gambling, or for hunting, for making love, for anything, unless he wants to be just a common Indian . . . like me."

We were lying flat on our backs under a juniper. After a silence he started again: "When a fellow is young, everybody is after him to go to the mountains and get himself a *dinibowi*. The old men say: "You'll never amount to anything if you don't go and catch a *dinibowi*. And then you hear other fellows brag about their luck at gambling, or how they got a good *dinibowi* for hunting. Well, there come a time when a young fellow starts to feel uneasy, kind of sad, kind of worried, that's just about the time he's getting to be a man grown up. Then he start to 'wander,' that's what we call it, wandering. They say: Leave him alone, he is wandering. That's the time you go to the hills, you don't come home, you stay out all night, you get scared, you cry; two, three days you go hungry. Sometime your people get worried, come after you, but you throw rocks at them: Go away, I don't want you, leave me alone. You get pretty hungry, you get dizzy, you are afraid of grizzly bears. Maybe you fall asleep and someone come wake you up, maybe a wolf, push your head with his foot, maybe bluejay peck at your face, maybe little fly get in your ear, he say: Hey! Wake up! What you doing here? Your people worrying about you! You better go home! I seen you wandering here, crying, hungry, I pity you, I like you. I help you. Listen, this is my song. Remember that song. When you want me, you come here and sing my song. I'll hear you. I'll come. . . ."

I said to Robert Spring: "But then, I don't see what is the dif-

ference between the *dinibowi* and the *damaagome*. . . .” “There is no difference. It’s all the same. Only the *damaagome* that’s for doctors.” “How does the doctor get his *damaagomes*?” “Just like you and me get a *dinibowi*. He goes to the mountain. He cries. Then someone comes and says, this is my song, I’ll help you.” “Well then, I don’t see any difference.” “I am telling you there is no difference. Only the *dinibowi* that’s for plain Indians like you and me, and the *damaagome* that’s for doctors. . . . Well, I’ll tell you, there is maybe some difference. The *damaagome* is kind of mean, quarrelsome, always fighting. The *dinibowi* is more peaceful.”

There came a figure lurching toward us with a curious gait, something like an orangoutan, through the sagebrush. Robert Spring chuckled: “There comes your friend.” Sure enough, it was Sukmit. “How did you know he and I were friends?” “Oh, Indians hear everything. It don’t take long for news to travel in the sagebrush. I heard all about you stopping at his camp.” Sukmit greeted me: “Hallo, Jaime!” (He was the only Pit River who ever called me by my first name. The others used my nickname in that country, Buckaroo Doc, or just Doc.) Then he and Robert Spring greeted each other: *Is, kaakaadzi* (Person, you are living). He sat down on one knee, which was his usual posture. “I heard Doctor Hall was sick, so I came to help,” he said.

Now, that puzzled me. I had always heard that Indian shamans cordially detested each other. We told Sukmit that Hall had doctored himself and was now feeling better. “That’s good,” he said.

We all three went looking for the old man and found him sitting on a bench with his back to the shack and chewing tobacco. Robert Spring sat himself next to him and Sukmit and I on the ground in front, but careful to leave a clear space for the old blind man to spit into. Then there ensued the, to me, most amazing conversation about doctors and their poisons. Blind Hall started again on his pet subject of complaint: his pet *damaagome*, Jim Lizard, the lying sonofabitch he could never trust . . . but this time he had behaved himself, he wasn’t mean enough to fool his own father when his father was sick, etc., etc. And Sukmit to corroborate: “Yes, some of them *damaagomes* is mean. When I started doctoring I tried a trick. I tried bringing my poison to a

hand-game. Now, a doctor is not supposed to use his poison for gambling (this was addressed to me, not to Hall or Robert Spring). It's against the rules. But I thought I was smart, see. I thought to hell with the rules, I do like white man, see. Well, in the middle of the game I got awful thirsty, and I get up and go to the spring, and I take a long drink of water, and I got awful dizzy and sick, I got cramps, I puke. . . . See, my *damaagome* he do that, he mad because I bring him to hand-game, not supposed to do that." Blind Hall was roaring with laughter. "Ha, ha, ha. Your poison he make you sick. You bring him to hand-game, he make you sick. Ha, ha, ha."

Sukmit thought for a while, then he said: "Them *damaagomes* is dangerous things to handle. That's why I stick to my own and I don't try to steal other doctors' *damaagomes*. But this old man here, Doctor Hall, he don't care, he steal other doctors' *damaagomes*!" Blind Hall guffawed: "Sure I do! I steal other doctors' *damaagomes*. They steal mine, too, if they can. They try to steal my Raven, but he won't follow them. Ha, ha!" Sukmit said: "That's a good one, your Raven. I would like to have him myself. But I don't like to fool with other people's poisons. It may be a bad one and you can't handle him and he make you sick." Blind Hall laughed again: "I am not afraid of them!"

Later on that day I asked Robert Spring: "How do the doctors steal each other's *damaagomes*?" "I dunno, Doc, I am not a doctor. But you heard Blind Hall say so himself. How do you steal another man's dog?"

I stayed a few days longer at that camp, then I decided to go back to Alturas and see if Jack Folsom was back at his place. I went north by Hantiyu. Toward evening I made my camp in a swale where there was a brook. There was another camp a few hundred yards upstream from me. After eating I strolled over there. Indians, a middle-aged man, a young woman, and a child. The man was surly: "What you want?" "Nothing. I just came to visit." "I don't want no visit! That's your camp over there. Stay over there. You come my country. You kill my people. You take my land. This is my camp. Leave me alone."

As I went the woman gave me an apologetic smile: "He cross fellow. He don't like white people." Anyone could see that.

I found Jack Folsom and Lena at their place. He told me that the Pit Rivers have a word for "year" and one for "month." The word for month is the same as that for moon, of course. What surprised me was that they use the same word (*tsulb*) for sun and moon; if they want to specify, they say "night *tsulb*" or "day *tsulb*."² They named the months: month of the groundhog; month of the squirrel; month of the wild turnips; month of the deer running, etc. They had twelve such months, and every fourth year they repeated the midwinter month (they were aware of the solstices). This was the occasion for a lot of quarreling. As Jack Folsom put it: "It used to get pretty stinky in the winter house, especially after Indians got dogs.³ After two or three months of winter the litter of tules was lousy with vermin and fleas and bugs. People scratch all the time, want to get out go to the hills. Mebbe next moon is groundhog moon, and then next is squirrel moon, and then wild-turnip moon, that's the time people get out and go to the hills. They were in a hurry for the winter to end. And they argued and argued about it, the old men, the chiefs, did. This is the year we have to repeat the midwinter moon. No, it's next year. No, we did it three years ago. Ah, you don't know, you are too old, you are mixed up. We young fellows, we used to laugh listening to the old men argue. . . . Yes, Doc, the winters used to drag in the old-time *astsuy*. That's the time when you tell long stories, stories of long ago, *dilasini'qi* we call it. About Coyote, and Silver Fox, and Lizard, them all they used to be people, long long ago."

It was at about this time that I became acquainted with that "gambling" that I had been hearing so much about and which seemed to play such a part in Pit River life. It had puzzled me, for instance, to hear Jack Folsom lamenting the death of one of his sons a few years back, in these terms: "Yes, he was a fine boy, a good worker, never made any trouble, HE WAS A GOOD GAMBLER. . . ." Well, now I was going to have a chance to observe it; there was going to be an Indian big-time at Tulu'kuupi, there

²In the myths of many California tribes the moon is a man and the sun a woman. Among the Pit Rivers, however, I never heard either sun or moon mentioned in any stories or myths.

³Dr. Merriam, the eminent zoologist, confirmed me in my opinion that the California Indians got their dogs rather recently, from other tribes (who presumably got theirs by European importation, like the horse).

would be lots of gambling. I had always thought of gambling as dice or roulette or fan-tan or what-have-you in man's everlasting effort to beat the mathematical laws of chance. And I could see that like all hoary manifestations of human imbecility it would always attract the charlatans and the crooks and the sharks, the whole setup which is associated in our minds with the words gambling and gambler. I was trying to fit that into the Indian picture; it didn't fit. . . .

Tulu'kuupi, the "sack," the end of the valley. Indians were converging from everywhere, in buggies, on horseback, in wagons, and a few in rickety-rackety automobiles held up with bale-wire. Campfires everywhere in the sagebrush. There must have been a hundred or two hundred Indians. Greetings. Where is So-and-So? He is camped over there, under that juniper. . . . They say Wa'wa Eliyu is going to act as main chief. . . . Aw, he is too old. . . . The Paiutes have sent a team of good gamblers. And the Modocs, too. Some of our people are drunk already, the damfools, them Paiutes don't drink when they are playing hand-game, they'll beat us again. . . . I went around with Jack Folsom. He had more knowledge of modern ways than most of the older men, and it made him a sort of "chief." I knew quite a few Indians, from my previous experience as a cowboy in that country—and Jack introduced me to others: "He is all right. He is not a white man. He is Spanish." (In that part of the country, Spanish meant "Mexican," just riffraff to the white overlords of the ranches, only one degree above the Indians, who were on the level of horses and cattle.)

Evening had hardly set in when the rattle of sticks was heard, clack-clack-clack-clack-clack . . . and people began converging from all over the camp toward that spot. A hand-game had started between a team of Paiutes on one side, and a mixed team of Modocs and Pit Rivers on the other.

Between them was a campfire. The men of each team were kneeling in a row—in front of them a long plank, just a board. The Paiutes at the moment "had the bones." So they were singing, and except for two of them who were hiding the bones, they all were beating on the board in front of them with short sticks. That was the clack-clack-clack I had heard. It was about as fast in time as the ticking of a watch. It was as uniform in time as a

metronome, *and there was no beat*. The melody was a typical Paiute gambling-song, a short melody of four phrases, starting rather high and cascading down in intervals of a whole tone or a tone-and-a-half. They used the "closed throat" method of singing. There was no connection between the time of the clack-clack-clack and the time of the melody.

There they were singing away, the Paiutes were, and two of them were hiding the bones. The naked bone, and the tied bone. The tied bone has a string tied around its middle. You guess for the naked bone. But, if you are the guesser, you try to fool your enemy. You try to read his mind. You make melodramatic gestures. You point to the right, you point to the left, you point to the middle (with palm perpendicular), you point to the outside (there are *two* pairs of bones, remember, both naked bones might be outside). You try to remember this Paiute fellow's gambling habit, he always hides the naked bone in his left, and just as you say: "Ha," he shifts. You, you shifted them. You are supposed to turn your palms out. I did. No, you didn't. Yes I did. Where is the chief? He is drunk. Oh, what the hell, why don't you fellows play, you always argue—. . . These sons-of-bitches *pabaq-maali* Paiutes, that fellow there . . . No, he is Modoc. . . . You are crazy, him a *lutuaami*? You are crazy, he is my, I call him *malis*. He is my brother-in-law. *Malis*, that's fire. So there is an argument started. Clack-clack-clack-clack at it again. The Modocs are hiding the bones, now. The Paiutes are guessing. They don't quarrel among themselves. They pull down their hats over their eyes. The Modocs and Pit Rivers are singing. They swing their bodies from left to right, in the rhythm of the song. But they are not swaying just right. Something is wrong. Two of them are very drunk. The Paiutes are putting their heads together, whispering, with their hats pulled over their eyes. Somebody throws a bunch of twigs on the fire. It blazes up. All the Paiutes grab their hats and shield their eyes. There is one fellow who seems to be their leader. He has a very dark face. His hair is down to his shoulders. They all are whispering to him. He leans over, listening to them. Sometimes he nods. The Modocs and Pit Rivers are getting a little bit out of hand. Two drunken fellows try to horn in. Suddenly they change their song. It falters for a while and dies away in the sagebrush. Everybody laughs. An old woman

gets up and spits and goes to her camp in the darkness. Campfires everywhere around. People cooking. Smell of bacon. People calling across. "How is the game?" "Them Paiutes are winning. Our people are drunk. They have no luck, anyhow!"

That Paiute man starts. He claps his hands, then he spreads them apart. He is on his knees. Then he brings the hands together, slowly. He is pointing to the middle (both naked bones inside). One of the Pit Rivers shifts his bones. Everybody laughs. The Paiutes never laugh. They are very different people, full of the desert. An old woman cackles, back of the firelight. Now both players on the Modoc-Pit River combination get nervous and shift their bones. The Paiute man says: HA! and he points with an outstretched hand. Both Pit River-Modocs throw their bones across, laughing. A man bends over and pulls one of the markers and sticks it in the ground on the Paiute side. Everybody yells. He looks confused. "The bones are on that side. What's the matter with you?" He scoots out of sight. Now the Paiutes have the bones. . . .

I stirred in my sleep. The camp was quiet. Just a few babies crying here and there, but the game was going on, clack-clack-clack-clack, out there where the campfire was flickering and black shadows of men moving against it.

We were camped there nearly a week, playing hand-game, making speeches, long-winded speeches. Those speeches of the old men! You don't have to listen to them. Why do the young men sit there on the ground, listening with mouths agape? Nobody obliges them, no pressure of public opinion (there is very little public condemnation for anyone's sins, among the Pit Rivers, they are simply tolerant), then why do all the people, men, women, young men, even little boys, gather around, sit on the ground. Those speeches of the old men, those long-winded speeches!! They always start at the beginning of the world, literally: ". . . and then Silver Fox said to Coyote . . ." and it goes on and on and on. All the verbs are put in the remote past conjugation, with the ending in *-uaasa* or *-iaasa*). And then *kuan tsikuaasa dzeemul*. And then Coyote he didn't *-aasa* know what to answer. And if the white people get enough of us Indians to sign that paper for Washington, we will be like Coyote and we will *-aasa* lose the rest of our lands, etc., etc., etc. for hours.

Then the people move over to another old man. He is a Pit River by birth, but he was brought up by the Klamath Indians (who are first cousins to the Pit Rivers), and while there he came under the influence of two movements: the Indian Shakers and the Christian Missionaries (the C. M. failed utterly with the Pit Rivers, they didn't even get to first base). Now he starts. His speech is quite nonpolitical. It has to do with religion and Jesus. He speaks by turns in Pit River and in English: "This here Jesus, he and his wife Mary, and they had a little boy with them, they traveled all over the world, they made mountains and trees, they made trees, they made springs everywhere, *teeqaade toolol*. . . . This here Jesus he was a great man; he was the best gambler in the whole United States!" The Modocs weren't listening to him much; there were no Paiutes in the audience. Almost all the listeners were Pit Rivers. There were no jeers, no heckling, just a lot of brown faces squinting in the sun. When he was finished, mopping his brow, they moved over to where another hand-game had started, all women. There was a big Modoc woman. Nobody could guess her. She hid the bones in a bandanna handkerchief. While she sang she shook her big fat body, sitting on the ground, swaying from side to side with the rhythm of the song. Then she would whip her hands out with the handkerchief still in one hand. The guesser would yell "Ha." She would laugh, show the bones, and throw them in the air. They always guessed her wrong.

It was dawn, and everybody was stirring all over the camp. Some early wagons were already departing. Business of packing, gathering baskets, harnessing or saddling horses, calling scampering children. I was saddling my horse, talking to Jack Folsom. A man came to us. He was the same surly fellow who had received my visit so badly some time before. I had noticed him watching me closely around camp several times, but I never spoke to him and he never spoke to me. This man now came to me and he put a beautiful little buckskin bag embroidered with beads into my hands, and he said: "My wife made this for you." Then he just turned on his heel and was gone. I stood there, sort of dumbfounded. Jack Folsom looked at the bag and said: "That's nice bag, Doc, that's good work." "Who is that fellow, Jack?" "I don't know him, Doc. I think he comes from down the river."

From there I went back with Jack and Lena to their shack tucked away in the sagebrush, behind a hill not far from Alturas. We took up the study of language again, and went out in the brush with his rifle to shoot jackrabbits (hares) for the cooking pot. There were hundreds and hundreds of them, darting from every bush. In a minute or two we would bag one, which was enough for the three of us. Then we would sit down and talk and talk. . . . "Jack, have you got a *dinibowi*?" Jack looked at me, squinting a smile: "Where did you learn that word, Doc?"—"Oh, here and there, Blind Hall. . . ." Jack snorted. "That old bastard hasn't got any *dinibowis*. They wouldn't live with his poisons. You want to know what that old man does with *dinibowis*? He steals them, just like he steals other doctors' *damaagomes*. He steals honest Indians' *dinibowis* but he can't keep them. They won't live with his poisons. When he wants to get a woman he goes into the brush and he calls for a lice from her. . . ." "For a what?" "For a lice. Them things crawl around between your legs." "Oh, a louse." "I dunno. I always heard white people call them lice. We say *a'mits*. Lots of Indians got them. So this Hall goes into the bush, and he has got an *a'mits* himself for one of his poisons. And he gets his *a'mits* to call for her *a'mits*. And pretty soon the woman get up from her campfire, she don't know why but she go wandering into the sagebrush and old Hall is there waiting for her."

"But Jack, that lice is not her *damaagome*!" "How the hell do I know it ain't her *damaagome*. It might be her *dinibowi*. I didn't say it was her *damaagome*."

"No, that's right, I made a mistake. I meant her *dinibowi*."

"I didn't say it was her *dinibowi*. Lots of us got them lice between our legs."

I shut up. Jack was a very kind man, but whenever I seemed stupid he would sort of lose his temper and get cross and squint across the hills. I had learned the weather signals. So I shut up.

We were still sitting in the same spot. Jack says, out of the blue: "Yes, I got a *dinibowi*. Must be a damn poor Indian without a *dinibowi*. When I was a young fellow, old people always get after us. You go get luck for yourself. You can't live without luck. Go and run up the mountain in the afternoon. Try to beat the sun, the red light, to the top, get there first. Keep your breath.

Run steady. . . . You know, Doc, I used to be a good runner. We used to have foot-races in the old-time days. All the young Indians we used to try beat each other going from one place to another, maybe five mile, maybe ten mile. Run through the sagebrush, keep your breath in, don't slow down, don't sit down and sleep, don't get scared, keep running through the brush, sometimes awful high brush, higher than your head. . . . I was pretty good runner in them days. Now I make my race-horses run. . . . Well, the old people kept after me. You beat the sun to the top of the mountain, then you'll be a man. I tried, and I tried. Then one day a big frog was standing in the road, right in the dust of the trail. He says: You'll never get to the top without me helping you. I been watching you. It's awful how hard you try. I'll help you. . . ."

"Did you get to the top that day?"

"Yes, I got to the top. There ain't nothing there."

"Then what?"

"Then I came down."

"Oh. . . ."

"What do you mean, oh? I got my *dinihowi*, didn't I? I am always trying to tell you things, Doc, but you are worse than a young Indian."

We came back through the brush. He was wiping the barrel of the gun with a rope with a rag tied to it. I was carrying the hare of the day by the long ears. Lena was sitting in front of the shack. That woman was truly enormous. She was at her eternal beadwork. She looked up at us and smiled. Then she went back to her beads. I laid the hare in front of the campfire. Jack said, "Better draw it, Doc. We'll have it for supper. I am going out to look for them horses." Those were wonderful quiet days with Jack and Lena, in that little corner of sagebrush behind the turn of the hill.

But it was only a few days before Jack got restless again. He had some race-horses he had loaned to a fellow in Hat Creek. They were colts. He had to keep an eye on them. He didn't trust that fellow. Off they went again, in the spring-wagon, we pushed and hoisted and drug Lena into the wagon-bed where she sat enthroned amidst her many baskets. Jack got into the driver's seat, released the brakes. I didn't have time to say goodbye even. He had hitched up a colt with an old horse. The old horse started. The colt bucked. Down came the black snake over his buttocks.

They were off and the wagon almost tipped, Lena was holding onto the sides, smiling. Jack turned his face around once. He was grinning and he yelled something, but I didn't catch what he said.

I stayed there that night, but in the morning I went.

II

I was up again, the next year. This time I had a jalopy, myself. Progress. You can't defend yourself against progress. So this time I came up following the Pit River from Redding up. I was meeting more and more Indians after Montgomery Creek. I had never been through that territory before, only once, years before with a drove of horses, through a snowstorm. I didn't even recognize the country.

I got into the upper land. It was getting dark. I had a wolfish-looking bitch swaying on the back, on top of my camping stuff. I was getting tired driving that damned car. I hate them. When I got to Big Valley I couldn't stand the driving over the rough road any more. I saw a campfire a little south of the road. I was awfully tired. I thought: They must be Indians.

I got out and walked over, being careful to make a noise. There was no need for care. There comes Sukmit: "I have been watching for you. I got lonesome for you. I sent my poison after you. The old lady is there, in the camp. Old lady Gordon died. The other woman, my uncle, she is dead. We are all going to die. We can't help it. What have you got there? Is that a coyote? Looks a coyote. Don't growl at me, you son-of-a-bitch, I am Indian doctor. I ain't afraid of you. Want to be my poison? Say, Jaime, did you get my message? I got lonesome for you. You want to be a doctor? I teach you. I am Indian doctor. I teach you, pretty bad, get scared, I teach you, you no white man. . . ."

Under this avalanche I was being dragged across some wasteland toward the campfire I had seen. There were no introductions of any kind whatever. Nobody paid any attention to me at all. I sat in a corner. I said nothing. Then a little boy brought me a basket full of some kind of mush, and it had salt in it, too. I was reserved and very careful, keeping out of the way, in the outer light of the fire. Then Mary's chuckle came out of the darkness (I hadn't seen her until that moment, sitting there beyond the firelight): "Ha-ha, you white man."

I followed that bunch for several weeks. I never saw such a

goddam lot of improbable people. Sukmit was the only acknowledged shaman, but he wasn't a leader. He was no chief, no *weheelu*, among them. We went around the brush. We would stop anywhere, evidently by common consent. We would stop in the brush. Always there was a spring near by. I never knew where we were going. We were going somewhere. I didn't care at all. We were going somewhere, maybe. And if we were not going somewhere, we were not going, that's all. In the evening we would make a fire, several fires (there were several families of us). In the morning we moved again. I don't know where we were going. I don't think the Indians knew. We made quite a procession through the sagebrush, about six or seven of us, my car usually tagging at the end. I didn't know where we were going, nobody seemed to know where we were going, and then the night would settle on us, the fires would die down. The coyotes would begin barking from out in the brush. The Indians' dogs would howl back. Then everything would smolder back into the darkness.

Then one morning I was made to realize that there was something wrong about the white man's conception of the "taciturn" Indian. That happened the next day. We were going along the sagebrush, no road, just sagebrush, wind left, wind right, avoid this big clump, here's bad one, bump into the ditch . . . but there is no road at all anywhere, you are going through the brush, bumpety bump, all of us, six, seven, maybe eight cars, eight tin lizzies rattling through the sagebrush. Then, one morning, we had to stop. One of the tin lizzies was on the blink, and everybody got out to help. Then I witnessed something that amazed me. I had made up my mind that these men were straight out of the old Stone Age. I myself am not a mechanic; I hate machines; I am all thumbs; I don't understand machines; horses, yes; machines, no. And here I was watching these Stone Age men unscrew and rescrew and take things apart or out of the engine and spread them on a piece of canvas on the ground . . . but the amazing thing to me was their argumentation. It was perfectly logical. ". . . Can't be the ignition, look, I get a spark . . . I tell you, it's in the transmission . . . Now pull that lever . . ." Maybe I was overimpressed because the simplest machine smells of magic to me. Maybe I missed a lot of their argument because off and on they would lapse into Pit River. They called the battery *badatsi*

"heart"; a wheel is *pi'nine* (a hoop used in the old days for target practice); and so on and so forth. But certainly they made use of logic just as any white man would. Finally the engine, or whatever was wrong, was repaired. Then I overheard one young fellow say to another: "You know why this happened? Because he has been sleeping with his woman while she was menstruating! That's against the rules."

At last everything was fixed: the engine put together again, everything rescrewed . . . but the trek of the tin lizzies was not resumed. We just stayed there.

I don't know why we stayed there. We just stayed there, in the middle of nowhere, in the middle of the sagebrush. After that car which had broken down had been repaired, I naturally expected that everybody would get back into their cars, and the procession be resumed. But no, nobody got back into the cars; everybody was drifting around, sitting here, sitting there, gossiping, yawning.

I asked a man: "Are we going on, or do we camp here?" He answered: "I dunno. I am not the chief. Ask that old man over there." I went to the old man over there. He said he was not the chief. Ask that fellow over there. That fellow over there was a middled-aged man. He said: "Hell, I am not the one to say, I am not a chief!" "Well, who is a chief here?" "I dunno. That old man over there, I guess. He is old enough to have the say. Go and ask him." That old man over there was the same old man over there, and he gave me the same treatment. He was no chief. Who said he was a chief? They could start when they liked, when they jolly well liked, he didn't care, he didn't even know where they were going, where the hell were they going, did they know where they were going, did I know where they were going?? . . . He sat on the foot-board of one of the cars. He was squinting into the afternoon sun; it was late afternoon, by then. He was chewing tobacco and spitting the brown juice. He paid no more attention to me and went back to his reverie, squinting into the sun.

I noticed a woman had started a campfire. Very soon another one did likewise. So I went to my car and drove it next to Sukmit's. Old Mary was sitting on the ground in the shade of the car, weaving a rough basket of willow twigs. "Where is Sukmit?" "*Tsesuwi diimas'adi*, I don't know, went off in the brush some

place, that boy is crazy, *yalu'tuusi*, always looking for *damaa-gomes*; you bring me firewood, white man, I cook." "All right."

The sun was going down. I heard two or three shots, off in the sagebrush. I made our fire. There were four or five other campfires. A man came by; he had several hares by the ears; he tossed one over to us. Mary drew it, threw the guts to my bitch, hacked it in four pieces, and stuck these on sticks to broil over the fire. No sight of Sukmit. We ate. Then Mary told me an old-time story. I spread my blankets on the ground. I rolled a cigarette and watched the stars. Some coyotes started a howling, not far off. My bitch stood up, all bristles, and she howled back (in answering coyotes, most dogs howl instead of barking). I went to sleep with my head full of old-time stories, tin lizzies, *damaagomes* mixed up with engines, coyotes and sagebrush.

I was awakened by the usual quarrel between Sukmit and his mother. The smell of coffee was in the air. We ate. I observed the camp. There were no preparations for starting. Everybody lolling around. Mary took up her basket and kept on weaving. Another woman went to the spring with a bucket (there was a spring, nearby; of course they must have known). A man was tinkering with his car. Another one went off into the brush with his gun. That old man, the supposed "chief," was going around poking at things with a stick. He was almost blind. The morning was drawing on. I took out my notebook and started working on linguistics.

The days went by. Not so many days, but four, five days, maybe. I don't remember exactly. I was not taking notes. I was living. Sagebrush. Old-time stories, hares cooking over the fire, slow gossip, So-and-So is poisoning So-and-So, I don't believe it, yes he is, how do you know, well his paternal aunt belongs to the *hammaawi*, and they poisoned his *apau*. "That doesn't make him related!" "Who said related? I didn't say related. I said they poisoned him." . . . The days went by, four, five, six days.

Then it happened. It was midday, or near. I heard a man say, way off: "*S.buptsiidzima*." If he had said *lbuptiidza toolol*, "Let's all go," it would have been different. But no, it was not in the imperative mode, it was in the indicative: "We are going, all of us, *toolol*, we are going, *s.buptsiidzima*, we are all going." He didn't say: LET'S ALL GO! No, he merely stated a fact: WE ARE ALL GOING.

It was like a whirlwind. I turned around. Women were throwing baskets into the tin lizzies. Then without any further warning or consultation one of the tin lizzies started off in a cloud of dust. Another was right on its heels. Then a third one, but this one had hardly started when someone yelled, "Hey! you are forgetting your baby!!" The car backed, a young woman jumped out and ran to a juniper tree where the baby was sleeping in the cradle-board swinging under a branch; she slung the cradle-board over her shoulder and ran back to the car, laughing and laughing; everybody was laughing; then the car started again.

Sukmit yelled at me: "*Lhupta*, let's go! For Christ's sake, are you going to stay here forever?!" I picked up my papers and ran for my own car. . . . We go, we go, we wind in and out, all afternoon, all the cars more or less following each other, we skirted the town of Alturas, never stopped, we were going north, the sun went down, there was a moon, we kept going, somehow or other no car broke down, not even a flat tire, we had luck with us, and toward morning we stopped on those flats by Davis Creek. . . .

I was going back to Berkeley. I wasn't going to be caught by the fall, much less by the winter (it goes down to minus 30 Fahrenheit all over the plateau, Alturas, Susanville, Lakeview). I said to Sukmit: "Let's go down southward. I have a camping-place there in Berkeley. It's close to San Francisco." "Yes, I have heard of that place. Lots of people, they say." "Well, let's go, *lbepta*, you and me." "No, not *lbepta*, *lhupta*. We are not going home, we are going away from home. I have told you that a million times already. It's no use trying to teach a white man." "I am going to my home," I yelled. "My home, that's *septa*, isn't it?" "No, it isn't *septa*. That would mean that you are on your way. You are sitting here, ain't you? You are not *septa*, you are *tapte-gudzii*. . . ." The old lady called over from the fire: "What you two arguing about again? You all the time the two of you arguing like two old men! You white man he Indian, ha-ha-ha..."

We sit down under that tall pine tree, and eat. We are still quarreling, Sukmit and I. "How can you go southward and leave your *damaagome* behind you?" "He can find me, can't he? I can sing his song. He'll hear it. Just like 'lectricity, goes under ground, anywhere I can call my *damaagome*, he comes. . . ." Old Mary looks up. "He never come . . ." she says. Sukmit flares into

a rage at her. "He come! He come! He come!" He is stamping around her. He is in a perfect rage. He is shaking both fists over her head. She says: "He never come."

I was sort of upset, even shocked, by this childish behavior, this tantrum, on his part. There he was the powerful shaman, the tamer of *damaagomes*, *trépignant autour de sa mère*, shaking his fists over her head, shouting: "They'll come! They'll come when I call them, goddam it they'll come!!" The old lady was sitting on the ground weaving her basket. She smiled; she kept repeating calmly: "They won't come . . . too far . . . they can't hear you."

After a while he calmed down. I proposed to record some songs on my phonograph machine. I carried around one of those old Edison phonographs with a big horn. You made the records on wax cylinders with a special cutting jewel needle; then to play them you changed to a needle with a rounded point. The whole contraption was crude and primitive compared to modern methods. It was hard enough to operate in a laboratory; imagine it in the open, competing with the wind; the horn would swing around; we cursed. . . . How I sweated and labored over those Indian songs, and the fortune I spent on broken records! . . . That was before the days of amplification; later on new methods appeared; flat disks, unbreakable and permanent; wonderful improvements . . . but the Indians are gone, no more singing to record.⁴

Sukmit had a powerful voice of which he was vain. He was delighted to sing into the horn and then hear his own voice thrown back at him. We recorded several songs, mostly gambling songs and some puberty-dance songs. Then he said: "Let's record Old Blind Hall's medicine-song, you know, that one about digging up wild turnips and they all are rotten." So we put that on. It goes something like this:

*At Dalmo'ma near the spring
I dig for wild turnips
At Dalmo'ma in the evening
I turn up but rotten ones.*

⁴The University would not help me; took no interest; would not even give me enough money to have the records transcribed and made permanent on modern disks. Decent anthropologists don't associate with drunkards who go rolling in ditches with shamans.

Then I said to him: "Sukmit, let's record one of your own medicine-songs." The old lady had heard me, and she cried from where she was sitting at the campfire. "Don't do it, Sukmit, don't do it, *tse-dutsee, tse-dutsee!!*" He seemed dubious, torn two ways by his vanity and his fear of possible consequences. "See, suppose I put my song in the machine; now you go to Berkeley; sometime you play my song; my *damaagome* he hear it, he say: Ha! my father is calling me, I'd better go and find him, maybe he needs me. . . . So he come here to Berkeley, strange place, maybe he get lost, maybe somebody steal him . . . then I get sick, maybe I die. . . ." "Aw! he couldn't hear that phonograph all the way from Alturas!" "Sure he can! Just like 'lectricity, it goes underground, but it don't need no wires."⁵ "What do you know about electricity?! Electricity doesn't work that way!" "Hell, what do you know about *damaagomes*? You are nothing but a white man, a goddam tramp."⁶ "No, I am not a white man!" "Yes, you are a white man, you are a white man forever!!".

Old Mary chuckled from over the campfire "You two always quarreling like two old men. You Indian, you white man, ha-ha-ha! You both crazy!"

So I took them down to Berkeley in my auto, Sukmit and old Mary (she once told me her Indian name; it had something to do with tule reeds at dawn; but I never heard any one call her by it; Sukmit called her *niini*, baby-talk for *nen* "mother"; and I also called her that after a while; other Indians called her "aunt," or "sister-in-law on the brother's side," which is *wattulaawi*, or whatever the relationship term if they were related; if not related to her they just called her *wiya'tsaale*, which is equivalent to "old lady").

The city was a great disappointment to Sukmit. Didn't interest him at all. "Too many people crawling around just like ants—makes me crazy. . . ." He spent most of his time wandering in the hills back of the University campus. He looked sad and dejected. He didn't quarrel any more.

⁵This was before the days of wireless (at least before wireless became common knowledge)—an interesting example of so-called "primitive mentality."

⁶The Pit Rivers call the whites *enellaaduwi*, literally "wanderer," from the verbal root *-lla-* "to wander," plus the adverbial suffix *-duw-* "around." What struck the Pit Rivers most about the first whites (prospectors, trappers, etc.) was that they appeared to be homeless.

One day I said to him: "Sukmit, I know what's troubling you. . . . You have been wandering in the hills and calling your *damaagomes*, and they don't hear you!" He looked at me and I thought he was going to burst into tears. "Yes," he said, "you and *niini*, you were right; they don't hear me; they don't come! I am going to die if I stay here."

So I sent them back on the train. Funny-looking pair they made at the station, bewildered, he with his long hair and his black sombrero, his long arms and his hump; she clutching a bundle; and her gray hair under a bright silk handkerchief we had just bought for her.

I spoke a word to the conductor for them. He smiled broadly: "Sure I'll take care of them. I know Indians. I was raised in Oklahoma."

As the train pulled out, old Mary gave me the Pit River goodbye: *Is tus'i taakaadzee*, Man, live well! *Ittu toolol bakaadzigudzuma*, We also will live.

III

I went up north again the next summer. I found Jack Folsom and Lena at their place behind the little hill in the sagebrush. I noticed that Lena seemed apathetic, ill. Jack was as usual, with his quizzical smile, his quiet ways, his practical sense. "Say, Doc, I hear your friend Sukmit is around. There is a woman sick near town, you know, that place just before you reach town, Indians live there, well, there is a woman sick there, some doctor poisoned her, and they got your friend Sukmit to doctor her . . . and say, Doc, we are pretty near out of grub, you will be in town in two minutes with your car, today is Saturday and the stores will be open late, and will you bring back some grub, get some bacon, and bring some sweets for Lena, she loves sweets, I don't know what's the matter with that woman, Doc, something's wrong, she don't look well to me." "All right, Jack."

So I went to Alturas, did the shopping, and on the way back, it was dusk, I saw the familiar figure of Sukmit, a little way off the road, walking through the brush with long strides. I stopped the car, and honked and yelled. He paid no attention. I honked and yelled again. Surely he must hear me. I got out of the car and went up to him. He had heard me all right, and he was in

a towering rage: "Goddam you, I am fixing for a doctoring! I have caught a new *damaagome* and I am training him, he is wild yet, he was following me like a dog, and here you come yelling your head off, you scared him away!" "I am sorry, Sukmit, I didn't know. . . ." "You never know anything. You'll never learn anything, you'll never be an Indian, you'll always be a damfool white man!" "All right, all right, you don't have to be so nasty about it," and I turned to go. He followed me: "Well, aren't you going to give me a ride? They are waiting for me, I have to doctor a sick woman." "What's the use if I scared your *damaagome*?" "Do you think I have only one *damaagome*? That's just a new one I am training."

So I took him to the place. There were a dozen or so Indians gathered around a campfire. There was a woman lying under a blanket on a bed of tules on the ground. Old Mary was there. She greeted me with her usual banter: "Here is the Indian white man. He is going to do the interpreting. No, maybe he'll do the doctoring. Ha-ha-ha, Indian white man." Most of the Indians already knew me. Greetings. "*Is kaakaadzi*, Man, you are alive, *is kaakaadzi*. Where have you been? Where is your wife, your son, *mi'mu amiteudzan*, *mi'mu belatsi*? Why didn't they come?"

Sukmit looked somber and abstracted. He went and looked at the sick woman silently; then he came back and knelt in front of the fire. Old Mary then got up and went a little way into the sagebrush and called the *damaagomes*.⁷ Everybody became silent. Then Sukmit started one of his songs. Two or three people caught on, then others, then nearly everybody. Then he clapped his hands and the singing stopped abruptly. Now he is interpellating a poison, and old Mary, his mother, interprets (that is, repeats word for word, but more slowly, although Sukmit never got himself into a state of *bafouillage*, like Blind Hall and some others). And so on and so forth. In between interpellations of the poisons there was the usual relaxing and smoking by the audience and the usual gossip. But Sukmit never relaxed. He became more and more somber and abstracted. To me he seemed to be getting exhausted. After a while of this he got up and "sucked" the sick woman:

⁷After the *damaagomes* have been called, no one is allowed to approach the meeting, whether Indian or white man. The reason is obvious: the sudden arrival of a stranger might scare away the *damaagomes* hovering in the air over the shaman's head.

he put his lips to different parts of her body and sucked with a strong hissing noise. Then he came back and knelt again in front of the fire, right next to me. He looked very sick. He asked for a container. Somebody passed him an empty can that had contained lard (a three-pound can), and he puked and puked and puked into it. I was right next to him. What he puked looked exactly like very dark blood, but the light was uncertain. He made a grimace and said to me: "Fuahh! . . . it looks like coffee." He was still retching. He poured the can into the fire.⁸

Most of the Indians then left. Old Mary looked very tired also. She said to me: "You take care of your Sukmit," and she disappeared. Sukmit was like a drunken man. I spread my blankets on the ground and dragged him in after me. For a long time he was crying like a child, and shaking all over. Finally he went to sleep.

In the morning he was quite all right. So also was the sick woman (she evidently had had a bad case of "funk"). She came to where we were having breakfast, and she gave Sukmit a string of beads for payment. She said: "It's not much but I am a poor woman." Sukmit took the string and threw it to his mother, and he said to the woman: "That's good. I am not doing it for payment." Then Sukmit pumped up his tires and he and old Mary started for Big Valley (which was their home), and I went back to Jack and Lena at their place in the sagebrush around the little hill.

Poor Lena was really sick. Jack would have liked to call in Blind Hall, but he was away somewhere down river. Then we heard that a bunch of Modocs were in town on their way to their home in Oregon, and with them was old Kate, a famous medicine-woman, and Jack decided to try her. She arrived in the afternoon, in a horse-wagon, with her son, a big strapping fellow (with whom I later studied the Modoc language). She was a little bit of an old old woman, so *racroquevillée* that she was almost bent double; she was nearly blind; still she insisted on "helping" (all

⁸The can looked about half full. Was it an intestinal hemorrhage of hysterical origin? Sukmit (unlike some of the shamans, Old Modoc Kate, for instance, of whom I will speak later) was incapable of *supercherie*. I can vouch for that. I knew him too well. When two boon companions get drunk together time and time again, the truth is bound to come out. I simply have no explanation for the stuff in that can except the one given above.

the conversation had to be in English, since the Modocs didn't understand Pit River, and vice versa) with the cooking. She would totter around, extend a claw, peer, grab something and drop it in the skillet. Jessie (Jack's daughter by another wife—and a big, handsome woman Jessie was, somewhere around in her forties, graceful, dignified, a little bit haughty), who had come to help,⁹ Jessie would sigh, turn her face aside to grimace, then calmly remove whatever *immondice* old Kate had dropped into the skillet.

Evening arrived. Old Kate had a sister who acted as her "interpreter," a much younger woman. Everything was ready; we were all inside the cabin; still old Kate was waiting for something; finally she said: "Dat white man going to stay?" "He is no white man!" said Jack. "He is Indian just like us." "What tribe?" she asked me. "Spanish," I answered. "Oh, dat's all right. Spanish good people." To her, too, Spanish meant Mexican.

Old Kate's procedure was slightly different from Blind Hall, Sukmit, or the other Pit River shamans I have associated with; but on the whole it followed the same lines—perhaps a little less loose, a trifle more conventionalized. For instance, her songs appeared to be directed less to an individual *damaagome* than to a generalized animal. Her sister would explain to me: "That's duck song . . . that's crane song . . . that's pelican song. . . ." The old woman's son had gone out. Doctoring didn't interest him. The Pit Rivers didn't know that kind of singing and were too self-conscious to try. Only the old woman's sister carried on the singing. Old Kate complained. Finally she turned to me: "Why you no sing? *Canta, canta!*" "All right, I'll try." The songs weren't difficult. They had more lilt than the Pit River ones. Anyhow, the important thing was to make a noise and be heard by the poisons.

Toward midnight or one o'clock (unlike the Pit River shamans, who never doctor for more than a couple of hours, Kate kept it up all night, right till dawn—although all the Pit Rivers had fallen asleep in various corners), Kate had a fit. She started to shake, foam at the mouth, and throw herself around. At first her sister tried to hold her down, but she wasn't strong enough. She

⁹Lena had raised Jessie, but they must have been almost the same age, at most ten years' difference—so Jessie looked upon Lena as her mother.

called for help to the Pit Rivers; but for some reason no one moved. Then she yelled at me: "Hey, you Mexican, hold her, I'll call her son. . . ." He came in, a calm, big, powerful fellow. Yet, with the two of us sitting on her she managed once to free herself, that little bit of an old woman whom ordinarily you could have pushed over with your little finger! After a while she quieted down, and the singing started again, at intervals. But she was tired. Once she peered at the roof: "Is dat morning?" "No, Kate, it's the moon. There is a crack in the roof." She sighed.

Finally she started to extract the poison. She sucked and sucked. Then she straightened up, put her hand to her mouth, and grabbed something that was between her teeth. In the light of the lamp I saw distinctly what she did: she bit a piece of her own fingernail off. This she exhibited around as the poison. Then she called for a bowl of water; she drowned the poison in it and threw the water in a corner of the room.

In the morning the Modocs started to go. Jack Folsom wanted to give Kate some money, but she refused it, "I didn't do any good, Jack, you people don't sing, my poison no hear. Your woman going to die. Too bad." She said goodbye to me. "You good man, Spanish, you help, you sing. Come see me my place Oregon." I said I would.

(I did go there, the next year, to study the Modoc language with her son. I had many talks with her. One day I was sitting on a log in the sun beside her; she was smoking her pipe; I said: "Kate, you remember that time at Jack Folsom's place when you doctored that woman. . . . You bit off your fingernail and said it was the poison. . . ." She gave me a sidelong look, pretty piercing in spite of her rheumy eyes; she grumbled: ". . . You know too much—sure dat's tomfoolery, good for people, make him believe—but my poison him no fool, him powerful, no nonsense, but he no hear dat time, son-of-a-bitch!" ". . . Kate, why did you become a doctor?" "Oh, long time ago, me young girl, go in woods look for berries, I no look for poison, poison find me." "Did he scare you?" "You bet he scare me!" "Does he still scare you when he comes?" She burst into her cackling laughter: "Hell NO! He don't scare me. I scare him now!!!")

Soon after the Modocs left, Lena's own father arrived from Hat Creek country. His name was Jack Wilson. He drove in in a

horse-wagon, and with him was an "elder brother" (or cousin) of his, who must have been close to ninety or a hundred; Jack Folsom (who didn't know his own age by years) said of Bob-Chief, or Tom-Chief (like all Indians he had a variety of American names): "When I was a young fellow that old man had already buried three wives." He was still erect, but walked slowly; his skin was the color of chocolate; a few long white whiskers made him look like a walrus.

Jack Wilson was a "sort of doctor," according to Jack Folsom. He would doctor his own daughter, that night. Old Tom-Chief would interpret. Jack Wilson was a tall man, very silent. During the day Tom-Chief, who usually sat on a log, would totter into the sagebrush and make a sort of speech. "What is he doing?" I asked Jack. "Oh, he is telling old-time stories, what the people used to do long ago." "But there is nobody there. To whom is he talking?" Jack shrugged his shoulders: "To the sagebrush, I guess."

When evening came, old Tom-Chief went out and called the *damaagomes*. Three young Indians had arrived; but they were slightly drunk. They sang a *contre-temps* and laughed. Jack had to reprimand them. Old Tom was very deaf; he didn't hear what the doctor said; so everybody had to shout at him what the shaman had said so he could repeat it; the whole thing was a failure. After about an hour Jack Wilson gave up in despair. "No use! My poison don't hear. Mountain lion, wolf, too far away, don't hear!"

In the morning he said to me: "I lost all my children. This the last one. I lose her too."

It was in the afternoon. Autumn and warm. The door of the cabin stood open. Away to the west I could see the hills of sagebrush, silent, and the mountains beyond. One of those days that do not move. There were half a dozen of us in the cabin, and the sick woman breathing heavily on her pile of blankets. I don't know how we all knew it, but we all felt that she was dying just then. At last, Jack Folsom broke down. He buried his face in his hands and started to cry. He cried like a little child, with convulsive sobs. Then that awful sound of the rattle. And even before that had died away Jessie began the wail. Oh, that weird, wild, atrocious thing that goes mounting like the shriek of a wounded beast, that infernal yell drawn away until it falls in a series of exhausted sobs. And again, and again. I was to hear that wail all night through the sagebrush until it drove me mad.

The old man, her father, was kneeling at her head. His face twitched uncontrollably. He closed her eyes, and laid a handkerchief over her face. Then he, too, broke down. He took the head of his child in his lap, he raised it to his breast, and he sobbed and sobbed.

All night long Jessie wandered through the brush, wailing, wailing. And all through the night Indians kept arriving. The men sat against the wall. The women went out into the night and wailed.

One Indian is dead.

Then Jack took his wife's body away to bury it in Hat Creek, her home. He said to me: "I'll be back here in about two weeks, and then we will burn her. Will you stay here for me, Doc?"

I was sort of puzzled about this business of burying first, and burning her after, but I didn't ask him any questions. I said I would stay until he got back. He said: "You sure won't be scared?" "No, . . . why should I?" "Account of the woman who died." "But why?" "She might come and kill you by mistake." "Hell no!" I said.

The very night after they had left, Wild Bill arrived. He was a horse-breaker by trade and I had known him in the days of my venture in ranching. A delightful fellow, always full of fun and jokes, and a superb rider; in fact he was a crazy daredevil. We had always been friends.

I was surprised to see him. He had tied his horse to a post in the corral and came over to me. He said he had come for the funeral, and that the woman-who-had-died was his cousin. He said "sister."

"How can she be your sister, Bill?"

"Well, she is, Indian way."

"I don't see how."

"Oh, yes. Look: her *apun*, her grandfather on the mother side was the elder brother, what we call *apau*, to my sister, the younger than me, my *enun*."

"But Bill, that doesn't make her your sister!"

"Sure it does, Doc. . . . See, if a man is my wife's brother I call him *malis*, and my own brother, if he is older I call him *apau*, but if he is younger I call him *atun*. Just like my sister, *apis* or

enun. But if he is my uncle, if he is my father's sister, then I call him. . . . Oh, hell, Doc; you can't get it straight in English. . . . But I tell you, this woman who died she is related to me, I know, because she always called this here Tom-Chief, *aqun*, and he also called me *aqun*, and that proves it."

Wild Bill said he would stay here and wait for Jack Folsom and the rest of the party to come back from the *atsuge* country. That evening he told me a lot about Coyote and the Coyote saga. The Coyote stories form a regular cycle, a saga. This is true of all of California; and it extends eastward even as far as the Pueblos of Arizona and New Mexico. Coyote has a double personality. He is at once the Creator, and the Fool. This antinomy is very important. Unless you understand it you will miss the Indian psychology completely—at least you will miss the significance of their literature (because I call their tales, their "old-time stories," literature).

The wise man and the buffoon: the two aspects of Coyote, Coyote Old Man. Note that I don't call them the good and the evil, because that conception of morality does not seem to play much part in the Pit River attitude to life. Their mores are not much concerned with good and evil. You have a definite attitude toward moral right and moral wrong. I don't think the Pit River has. At least, if he has, he does not try to coerce. I have heard Indians say: "That's not right what he is doing, that fellow. . . ." "What d'you mean it's not right?" ". . . Well . . . you ain't supposed to do things that way . . . it never was done that way . . . there'll be trouble." "Then why don't you stop him?" "Stop him? How can I stop him? It's his way."

The Pit Rivers (except the younger ones who have gone to the Government School at Fort Bidwell) don't ever seem to get a very clear conception of what you mean by the term God. This is true even of those who speak American fluently, like Wild Bill. He said to me: "What is this thing that the white people call God? They are always talking about it. It's goddam this and goddam that, and in the name of the god, and the god made the world. Who is that god, Doc? They say that Coyote is the Indian God, but if I say to them that God is Coyote, they get mad at me. Why?"

"Listen, Bill, tell me. . . . Do the Indians think, really think that Coyote made the world? I mean, do they really think so? Do you really think so?"

"Why of course I do. . . . Why not? . . . Anyway . . . that's what the old people always said . . . only they don't all tell the same story. Here is one way I heard it: it seems like there was nothing everywhere but a kind of fog. Fog and water mixed, they say, no land anywhere, and this here Silver Fox. . . ."

"You mean Coyote?"

"No, no, I mean Silver Fox. Coyote comes later. You'll see, but right now, somewhere in the fog, they say, Silver Fox was wandering and feeling lonely. *Tsikuellaaduwi maandza tsikualaasa*.¹⁰ He was feeling lonely, the Silver Fox. I wish I would meet someone, he said to himself, the Silver Fox did. He was walking along in the fog. He met Coyote. 'I thought I was going to meet someone,' he said. The Coyote looked at him, but he didn't say anything. 'Where are you traveling?' says Fox. 'But where are YOU traveling? Why do you travel like that?' 'Because I am worried.'¹¹ 'I also am wandering,' said the Coyote, 'I also am worrying and traveling.' 'I thought I would meet someone, I thought I would meet someone. Let's you and I travel together. It's better for two people to be traveling together, that's what they always say. . . .'"

"Wait a minute, Bill. . . . Who said that?"

"The Fox said that. I don't know who he meant when he said: *that's what they always say*. It's funny, isn't it? How could he talk about *other* people since there had never been anybody before? I don't know. . . . I wonder about that sometimes, myself. I have asked some of the old people and they say: That's what I have been wondering myself, but that's the way we have always heard it told. And then you hear the Paiutes tell it different! And our own people down the river, they also tell it a little bit different from us. Doc, maybe the whole thing just never happened. . . . And maybe it did happen but everybody tells it different. People often do that, you know. . . ."

"Well, go on with the story. You said that Fox had met Coyote. . . ."

¹⁰When you tell old-time stories of long ago, every verb must begin with *tsik-*, which then is more or less blended with the pronominal prefix.

¹¹To be worried, *-insimallauw-* (conjugation II). When an Indian is worried, he goes wandering, *-inillaadu-*. When he is "wandering" he goes around the mountains, cries, breaks pieces of wood, hurls stones. Some of his relatives may be watching him from afar, but they never come near.

"Oh, yah. . . . Well, this Coyote he says: 'What are we going to do now?' 'What do you think?' says Fox. 'I don't know,' says Coyote. 'Well then,' says Fox, 'I'll tell you: LET'S MAKE THE WORLD.' 'And how are we going to do that?' 'WE WILL SING,' says the Fox.

"So, there they were singing up there in the sky. They were singing and stomping¹² and dancing around each other in a circle. Then the Fox he thought in his mind: CLUMP OF SOD, come!! That's the way he made it come: *by thinking*.¹³ Pretty soon he had it in his hands. And he was singing, all the while he had it in his hands. They were both singing and stomping. All of a sudden the Fox threw that clump of sod, that *tsapettia*,¹⁴ he threw it down into the clouds. 'Don't look down!' he said to the Coyote. 'Keep on singing! Shut your eyes, and keep them shut until I tell you.' So they kept on singing and stomping around each other in a circle for quite a while. Then the Fox said to the Coyote: 'Now, look down there. What do you see?' 'I see something . . . I see something . . . but I don't know what it is.' 'All right. Shut your eyes again!' Now they started singing and stomping again, and the Fox thought and wished: Stretch! Stretch! 'Now look down again. What do you see?' 'Oh! it's getting bigger!' 'Shut your eyes again and don't look down!' And they went on singing and stomping up there in the sky. 'Now look down again!' 'Oooh! Now it's big enough!' said the Coyote.

"That's the way they made the world, Doc. Then they both jumped down on it and they stretched it some more. Then they made mountains and valleys; they made trees and rocks and everything. It took them a long time to do all that!"

"Didn't they make people, too?"

"No. Not people. Not Indians.¹⁵ The Indians came much later, after the world was spoiled by a crazy woman, Loon. But that's a long story. . . . I'll tell you some day."

¹²Indian dancing is not like the European, by lifting the heels and balancing the body on the toes; on the contrary, one foot is raised *flat* from the ground while the other foot is pressed into the ground (by flexing the knee); then a very slight pause with one foot in the air; then the other foot is stamped flat into the ground while the first one is lifted. That is the fundamental idea; there are many variations; besides, the shoulders and head are made to synchronize or syncopate.

¹³I am not romancing, nor translating loosely; *bay-dutsi-la* means literally "by thinking." The radical *bay-* means "thought"; *dutsi* is the verb "to be" used here as an auxiliary in participial form (i.e. "being"); *-la* is the suffix representing the instrumental case (i.e. "by").

¹⁴Those big clumps of coarse grass and sod which gradually rise above the level of the water on the marshes are called *tsapettia*.

¹⁵The word for "people" is *is*. Nowadays it is applied especially to Indians, in contradistinction to the term applied to the whites: *enellaaduwi*.

"All right, Bill, but tell me just one thing now: there was a world now; then there were a lot of animals living on it, but there were no people then. . . ."

"Whad'you mean there were no people? Ain't animals people?"

"Yes, they are . . . but . . ."

"They are not Indians, but they are people, they are alive . . . Whad'you mean animal?"

"Well . . . how do you say 'animal' in Pit River?"

". . . I dunno. . . ."

"But suppose you wanted to say it?"

"Well . . . I guess I would say something like *teeqaade-wade toolol aakaadzi* (world-over, all living) . . . I guess that means animals, Doc."

"I don't see how, Bill. That means people, also. People are living, aren't they?"

"Sure they are! that's what I am telling you. Everything is living, even the rocks, even that bench you are sitting on. Somebody *made that bench for a purpose*, didn't he? Well then *it's alive*, isn't it? Everything is alive. That's what we Indians believe. White people think everything is dead. . . ."

"Listen, Bill. How do you say 'people'?"

"I don't know . . . just *is*, I guess."

"I thought that meant 'Indian.'"

"Say . . . Ain't we *people*?!"

"So are the whites!"

"Like hell they are!! We call them *inillaaduwi*, 'tramps,' nothing but tramps. They don't believe anything is alive. They are dead themselves. I don't call that 'people.' They are smart, but they don't know anything. . . . Say, it's getting late, Doc, I am getting sleepy. I guess I'll go out and sleep on top of the haystack. . . ."

"But you'll die of cold! It's already freezing, these nights."

"Naw, I won't. I am an Indian. I am used to it."

"But why don't you sleep here, inside?"

"WHAT?! Are you crazy? That woman might come and kill me."

"You mean Lena?"

"Shh! . . . Doc! For God's sake don't call her, don't call her name! Just say: the woman who died. That's bad enough. She is probably somewhere around, somewhere around here. They

haven't burnt her things yet, you know, her baskets, her blankets, her clothes . . . all these things are calling her, are calling her shadow, her *de'lamdzi*."

"But why should she hurt you?"

"She don't want to hurt me."

"But you just said she might kill you. . . ."

"Well, she'll take my shadow away with her, and then I'll die."

"What for would she take your shadow away with her?"

"Oh, to keep from getting lonely on the road to the land of the dead people."

"Where is that?"

"I dunno. Nobody knows. Somewhere out west. They say there is a big lake there, no end to it, and the dead people live there on an island . . . I dunno . . . that's what I've heard."

"But, Bill, I still don't see why she should want to take you there. . . ."

"I just told you, Doc: to keep from getting lonely on the trip to the land of the dead. You would do the same thing yourself if you were going to a strange place. You would take along someone you knew and liked."

"Well then, she might take me, Bill. I know she liked me."

"Sure! That's why I tell you that you are a damn fool to sleep here!"

"Listen, Bill, tell me something else before you go . . . about the shadow, what do you call it, the *dalilamdzi*?"

"Naw, that means 'to make a shadow,' for instance *salilamdzi*, that means I am making a shadow, *kalilamdzi* it's you who are making a shadow. . . . No, Doc, I know what you are thinking about, that's the *de'lamdzi*, the shadow, that's not the same as *dalilamdzi*, that's the shadow . . . oh, hell, I dunno what's the difference, it kind of sounds the same, don't it? Lissen: I remember when I was a little boy I used to hear the old men when they woke in the morning, they used to sing:

dalilamdzi walilamdzi de'lamdzi seena seena
(the dawn is dawning a shadow I come home,

I come home)

"So the *dalilamdzi*, that means the dawn, also! The old people they would hum like that when they woke up in the morning and they said: My shadow is liable to go wandering during the night and mebbe get lost and not find me again in the morning,

that's why I sing to show him where I am! . . . Well, I think you are foolish to sleep here in this shack where she is liable to come back and take another look at her baskets that she made herself, and her stove, and everything, her shadow is, and it may ask your shadow to go along, and there will be no more Buckaroo Doc, and we will bury you and burn all your things, your saddle, and your book, and everything, and everybody will cry . . . well, good night, Doc!"

Wild Bill stayed there several days, waiting for Jack Folsom and the other people to come back from the Hat Creek country where they had buried "the woman who had died." He was an excellent raconteur and told me many old-time stories. There are tribes where the old-time stories and "myths" (as the anthropologists call them) are stereotyped, may even be cast in a rigid form and must be recited verbatim. But not so with the Pit Rivers! A poor story-teller gives you the barest outline, in short sentences (nearly all beginning with "and then . . ."), in a monotonous voice. But a good raconteur like Wild Bill or old Mary tells it with gestures, mimicry, imitation noises—a regular theatrical performance. If there are several people in the audience they grunt in approval after each telling passage. Instead of applauding by clapping as we do, they raise their chins and say: Hunh. . . .

Finally, one day about noon, Jack and all the relatives returned; five or six wagons full of them, and immediately everything was confusion and pandemonium in this quiet corner of the sagebrush behind the little hill. They started a big bonfire. There was a lot of argument going on. Some of the people were still wailing. A woman would come dragging things out of the house, maybe two or three baskets, maybe an armful of clothes, and throw them into the fire; then she would go out a little way into the sagebrush and wail. The men were mostly silent and preoccupied; some of them wailed in man fashion: a sort of deep grunt, Honh-ho-ho, honh-ho-ho. . . . They carried things swiftly out of the house, threw them into the fire, and went back for more. Some of them were arguing (they wouldn't have been Pit Rivers if there hadn't been some kind of argument going on!); there was a little man who kept coming to me and complaining that they ought to burn the house, also. That seemed to be a moot point because in the old days there were no individual houses. And besides, according

to Wild Bill, it was Jack's house, as well as the woman's who had died. . . . But the little old man was all for destruction. At least they should throw the stove into the fire. "But it won't burn!" said Wild Bill. "Well, throw it into the creek, then," said the fundamentalist.

I was sitting in my little tent, trying to keep out of the way. All this had happened so fast, like a whirlwind out of the sagebrush, that I was dazed. But everybody kept coming into my tent either to prove to me or to themselves that they were right, or to ask me if this or that object were mine, before throwing it into the fire. My copy of *Moby Dick* nearly went, and a horse's hackamore that belonged to me. Wild Bill stuck in my tent most of the time, sardonic as usual: "That's Indians for you! Just watch them, Doc. . . . Crazy goddam bunch. Always argue, always argue; argue all the time. . . . I wish they would get through with that burning. I have three colts I am breaking, at Tuluukupi, I left them in the corrals, I guess them fellows will feed them . . . still, I ought to be getting back to them."

Jack Folsom himself didn't seem to be doing anything except going around, wailing, crying, grunting. He came into my tent and sat on my cot and sobbed like a little child. "She was very good, that woman, Doc. She never quarreled. I have had four, no, five, before her. We have been together a long time now. You know my daughter Jessie, well she raised her. Jessie has got grandchildren now."

"But, Jack, I thought Jessie was this woman's daughter. . . ."

"No, another woman's. I have had three women already, no, four. No, two only, according to Indian way. This woman I paid for her and she paid for me. That's according to Indian law. I gave Jack Wilson, you know . . . the old fellow who was singing that night, I gave him a white mare, she was awful fast, she had won several races for me, and her people gave me the right to fish on Hat Creek. . . . But you noticed that woman that's come in with them? She is ordering everything around, she is bossing everybody. . . ."

"Yes, I noticed her. Who is she?"

"She is younger sister of the woman who died, what we call *enun*, same as what you call "cousin." So, she has come to claim me."

"What do you mean, claim you?"

"It's this way, Doc: according to Indian law, *the dead people have got the say*; the relations of the dead person have got the right. If I had died, then my people, my relations, they are the ones who have the right to bring another man in my place. It don't matter he is an old man good for nothing. They say: We bought that woman, she belongs to us now; here's a man for her; she take him, or give us back our present; we gave you a horse for her; where is that horse? Now, this woman who died I married her according to Indian law. So, her people, her relations, they come here with this other woman, and they say to me: You lost one, here's another, you got no claim against us."

"Well, then, it's all right, isn't it?"

"No, it ain't all right, Doc. I don't want that woman. She is all right. She is young, I know. She is clean; she is a good worker . . . but she is bossy as hell! She'll boss me . . . I am too old to be bossed!"

Afterwards I took Jack down to my little ranch in the mountains south of Monterey. We had to go fifty miles by horse-stage, then fifteen miles more by trail over the ridges. When we were on top of the highest ridge the sun was dipping into the ocean, and we stopped to eat some sandwiches and make a little coffee. But before he ate, Jack chewed a piece and spat some to the east, and to the north, and to the south, and to the west. "See, Doc, I am doing that because I am in a new country. Them people you don't see, them coyotes and foxes and all kinds of *dinibowis* and *damaagomes* that live around here, they don't know me, because I am a stranger. They might hurt me. So I am telling them: I am all right, I don't mean no harm to you people, see, I am feeding you; and you people don't hurt me neither, because I am a stranger but I want to be friends with you. That's the way to do, Doc, that's the good way."

Night overtook us, and we went down the steep trail in the dark. Jack was stumbling. "Say, Doc, you sure picked you a darn steep country for your homestead." We reached the cabin at last, and I lit a fire in the hearth. There was an old rock mortar, of the kind the Indians use to pound acorns with a stone pestle. They still use them in Central California, but, for some reason which I don't understand, they don't use them any more in the

Pit River country. Indeed, the Pit River Indians are afraid to touch them. "Them things are dangerous, Doc, them things are full of power. You come across one lying on the ground, some place; and next day you'll find him mebbe a mile further away! He moved during the night!" Whether it was only the ones that were lying abandoned "some place," or whether it was *all* mortars, I never found out. Anyway, I never saw any in use among the Pit Rivers. And now, Jack was very much shocked because I had one of these mortars lying near the hearth! "You shouldn't do that, Doc! He is getting too hot there, near the fire . . . make him mad . . . he is liable to hurt you, bring you bad luck, maybe make your children sick. . . ."

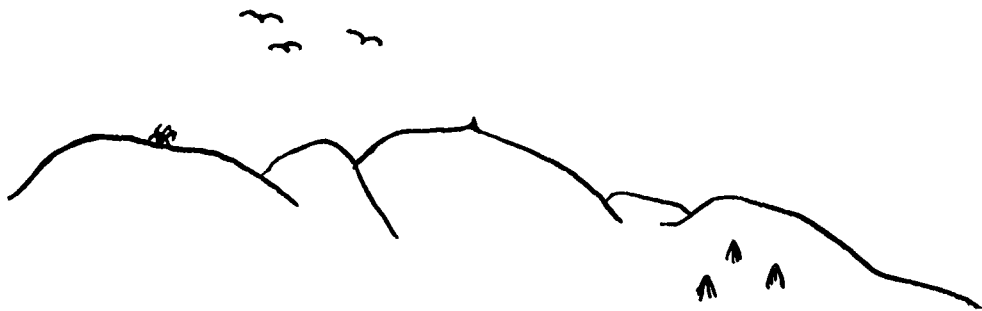
But Jack did not stay very long at my little ranch. He was having bad dreams. "I been dreaming of blood, Doc. It's those people working against me, my wife's people, the one who died. They have got some powerful doctors on their side. I should have married that sister of hers when she came to claim me. That's Indian law. I can't get out of it!"

So I put him on the stage and he went back to Modoc and the joys of matrimony.

When I saw him the next summer he looked subdued. He greeted me with his usual warmth, but when I asked him how he was getting along with his quondam sister-in-law, he said: "Oh, it's hell, Doc, just hell. I don't draw a free breath of my own."

I saw him again the next summer. He was radiant. "I got rid of her, Doc. I was camped at Davis Creek, and her brother he come and see me, and he says: Jack, I wouldn't stay with that woman, if I were you. She is too damn bossy! . . . Well, Doc, that's all I wanted to hear. He was her elder brother, so he had the say. So I called my own boy, Millard, you know him, and I said: I am going—when that woman comes back to the camp, don't tell her where I am gone—you don't know nothing about it, *sabe?*"

A few years later I found her married to Sukmit, of all people! But she had found her mate. They were yelling at each other, while old Mary smiled on complacently. Old Mary had earned her rest.



en los áltos los índios
cultivában las mílpas;
ciélo azul;
zopilótes girándo;
móntes y móntes y abísmos.



cantába la indiáda, fláuta trísté, chirimíya.

cabállo andadór, montúra grínga,
el jinéte encorváo, tiritándo su fiébreg;
a áncas úna muchácha.

y los índios decían en su léngua
“mirád vos al gachupín, póbre gachupín, mála calentúra”

en la cúmbre había un santuáριο
méro montón de piédras;
allí rézan los índios de mecapál a la sierpe del lago,
cuándo viáján con sus cárgas;
y cáda cuál écha un guijarrón.

se apeó el hómbré
“híja, ya no puédo mas! sígue tu a nuéstra tiérra”

cabállo andadór de buén páso,
cabállo andadór de buén páso;
y los índios déntro sus chózas decían en su léngua
“mirád vos la muchácha, y como que anda sola?”
híja del gachupín, misma cára altíva;
así éran nuéstros caciques en tiémpos de antáno”

en la cúmbre bájo el ciélo azul los zopilótes
con grándes álas elegántes girándo
decían en su léngua
“índio, gachupín, cabállo, múla, buéy,
tódos al cábo llégan a la mésa del zopilóte”

—JAIME DE ANGULO

Indian fields over uplands
sky azure
and vultures flying,
mountains, mountains, abysses.

Indians singing together,
flute sad; the low flute,
and the horse walking, walking
strong under foreign saddle
and the bent rider. He shakes with fever;
with a girl riding pillion.

And the indians say:
"See that poor dago,
poor dago, high fever."

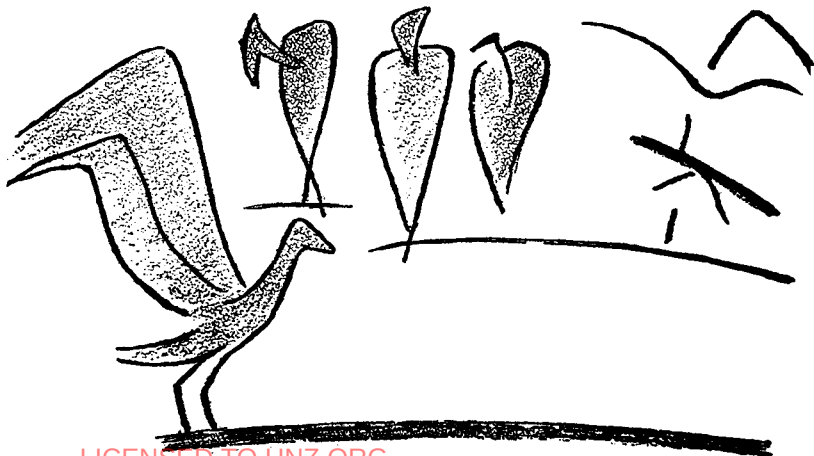
Holy shrine up aloft,
heap of stones, rather
where the indian porters pray to the Lake-Snake;
steady their loads with a head-band,
and every man adds a stone to the pile.

And the stranger gets down from his horse:
"I'm done, kid, get home without me."

The horse a good walker, good walker,
The indians inside their huts say:
"Look at that gal there, alone, going alone.
Dago's gal, with a face proud, proud,
That's what our chiefs were like in the old days."

And on the ridge under the blue air the vultures
with their elegant huge wings circling,
circling:

"Indian, dago, horse, jackass, cattle
all come to our table."



Over Sir John's Hill

DYLAN THOMAS

Over Sir John's hill,
The hawk on fire hangs still;
In a hoisted cloud, at drop of dusk, he pulls to his claws
And gallows, up the rays of his eyes the small birds of the bay
And the shrill child's-play
Wars
Of the sparrows and such who swansing, dusk, in wrangling
hedges.
And blithely they squawk
To fiery tyburn over the wrestle of elms until
The flash the noosed hawk
Crashes, and slowly the fishing holy stalking heron
In the river Towy below bows his tilted headstone.
Flash, and the plumes crack,
And a black cap of jack-
Daws Sir John's just hill dons, and again the gulled birds hare
To the hawk on fire, the halter height, over Towy's fins,
In a whack of wind.
There
Where the elegiac fisherbird stabs and paddles
In the pebbly dab-filled
Shallow and sedge, and 'dilly dilly' calls the loft hawk,
'Come and be killed,'
I open the leaves of the water at a passage
Of psalms and shadows among the pincer'd sandcrabs prancing

And read, in a shell,
Death clear as a buoy's bell;
All praise of the hawk on fire in hawk-eyed dusk be sung,
When his viperish fuse hangs looped with flames under the brand
Wing, and blest shall
Young
Green chickens of the bay and bushes cluck 'dilly dilly,
Come let us die.'
We grieve as the green birds, never again, leave shingle and elm,
The heron and I:
I young Aesop fabling to the near night by the dingle
Of eels, saint heron hymning in the shell-hung distant
Crystal harbour vale
Where the sea cobbles sail,
And wharves of water where the walls dance and the white cranes
stilt.
It is the heron and I, under judging Sir John's elmed
Hill, tell-tale the knelled
Guilt
Of the led-astray birds whom God, for their breast of whistles,
Have mercy on,
God in his whirlwind save, who marks the sparrows hail,
For their souls' song.
Now the heron grieves in the weeded verge. Through windows
Of dusk and water I see the tilting whispering
Heron, mirrored, go,

As the snap feathers snow,
Fishing in the tear of the Towy. Only a hoot owl
Hollows, a grassblade blown in cupped hands, in the looted elms,
And no green cocks or hens
Shout
Now on Sir John's hill. The heron, ankling the scaly
Lowlands of the waves,
Makes all the music; and I who hear the tune of the slow,
Near-willow river, grave,
Before the lunge of the night, the notes on this time-shaken
Stone for the sake of the souls of the slain birds sailing.

The Poetry of Dylan Thomas

DAVID AIVAZ

DYLAN THOMAS, now thirty-six years of age, has long been an "influence." This is the quickest, if a questionable, way to suggest the stature he has attained since his first book of poems was published in 1934. The manifestoes of Henry Treece and J. F. Hendry, the leaders of the "Apocalyptic" or "Neo-Romantic" group of young British poets, place him in distinguished company: "Apocalyptic creation is a European movement or tendency whose immediate forebears are Kafka, Epstein, Picasso, the later Yeats and Dylan Thomas."¹ These manifestoes contain much dark talk about "organic wholeness" and "ideal anarchy." The Apocalyptic program is a denial of program, and best defined negatively as a reaction from the social comment of the thirties. It is not difficult to discover the appeal that Thomas has for the movement. His poetry is, in a sense to be investigated, organic; as a reviewer has remarked, "You must be *in* these poems to have them." His images are of the natural world. He betrays no sign of social or economic bias. Most important, his imagery and syntax, if not his metric, often seem to be as "anarchic" as the minimal formal requirements of a poem will allow:

*A grief ago,
She who was who I hold, the fats and flower,
Or, water-lammed, from the scythe-sided thorn,
Hell wind and sea,
A stem cementing, wrestled up the tower,
Rose maid and male. . . .*² (SW, 20)

He has been discussed as a Surrealist. Geoffrey Grigson, his most distinguished detractor, complains that "his words come up bub-

¹Cited from an "advertisement" of Treece and Hendry by Marshall Stearns in the *Sewanee Review*, Summer 1944.

²All page references are to two American editions: *The World I Breathe*, New Directions, 1939, and *Selected Writings*, Norfolk, Conn., 1946. Many of the poems have appeared in earlier volumes.

bling in an automatic muddle . . . his poetry as near as may be is the poetry of a child, volcanic, and unreasoning"; while Edith Sitwell, reading by ear, champions his cause thus: "This condensation of essence, this power of 'becoming the Tree,' is one of the powers that makes Mr. Thomas the great poet he is. His poems appear, at first sight, strange. But if you heard a tree speak to you in its own language, its own voice, would not that, too, appear strange to you?" It would; but this is to say nothing of Thomas' poems. Julian Symons falls into the opposite error.³ He abstracts a conceptual "meaning" from the imagery of the poems, and finds it, therefore the poems, wanting: "What is said in Mr. Thomas' poetry is that the seasons change; that we decrease in vigor as we grow older; that life has no apparent meaning; that love dies. His poems mean no more than that. They mean too little."

Thomas has written of his method of composition in a letter to Treece:

. . . a poem by myself needs a host of images, because its center is a host of images. I make one image,—though "make" is not the word, I let, perhaps, an image be "made" emotionally in me and then apply to it what intellectual and critical forces I possess,—let it breed another, let that image contradict the first, make, of the third image bred out of the other two together, a fourth contradictory image, and let them all, within my imposed formal limits, conflict. Each image holds within it the seed of its own destruction, and my dialectical method, as I understand it, is a constant building up and breaking down of the images that come out of the central seed, which is itself destructive and constructive at the same time. . . . Out of the inevitable conflict of images—inevitable, because of the creative, recreative, destructive, and contradictory nature of the motivating center, the womb of war—I try to make that momentary peace which is a poem. . . .

Some implications of a "dialectic" of composition will be considered later. One point is clear: Thomas' divided allegiance to the words "let" and "make" does not permit one to base on this statement generalizations about the degree of reasonableness in his poetry. Thomas is a poet; evidence must come from the poems.

³In an article early laid waste by John Berryman. But such misreadings are common and large, my excuse for striking anew.

II

The following lines are typical of Thomas' early style: shifting rhythms, full rhetoric, strained syntax, and seemingly Surrealist imagery:

*Deliver me, my masters, head and heart,
Heart of Cadaver's candle waxes thin,
When blood, spade-handed, and the logic time
Drive children up like bruises to the thumb,
From maid and head,

For, sunday faced, with dusters in my glove,
Chaste and the chaser, man with the cockshut eye,
I, that time's jacket or the coat of ice
May fail to fasten with a virgin o
In the straight grave. . . .*

(SW, 6)

The images, when closely read, give no evidence of automatic writing. The obscurity is in the areas shaded by a conjunction of images, in the weighting of one symbol with more than one idea or quality. This kind of obscurity is inherent in Thomas' dialectical method, "inevitable" because of "the contradictory nature of the motivating center." The obscurity must be challenged on grounds of method, or not at all.

The stanzas are about death and ways to transcend it. The ways under consideration are, very roughly, sexual, aesthetic, religious. The question of their efficacy is left open by the "may" of the second stanza, the question of their relative efficacy by the interlocking imagery. "Head" is both male sexual symbol, as elsewhere in Thomas, and the mind. The first unites with "heart" and "maid" in sexual consummation. The second is contrasted with "heart" and "maid" in their sexual role, or (taking the "heart" of sentiment, the closer definition of "maid," the pun on "maidenhead," and looking ahead to "virgin o") as sensibility dissociated from mind and generation, as passion dissociated from action. "Heart" and "candle" in the second line repeat "heart-head." The words "waxes thin" reinforce the verbal ambiguity of "head," for "waxes" can be read "increases" or "candle-wax burns down": do mind and flesh thrive only at each other's expense? Blood is "spade-handed" because the heart is spade-shaped

and because spades dig graves; it is the naked hand of death that Sabbath-day religiosity tries to keep from sight ("glove"), to brush aside (but will the "duster" avail against this dust?). "Bruises to the thumb" is difficult. A "thumb" as the green thumb of the grower's art, as a palpitation of the heart: too many connotations weaken the image. The children of nature ("maid") and art ("head") arise from death (time, the dead heart). The fusion of passion and action, "chaste and the chaser," (the word-play is effective because the "chased" *are* "chaste," passion is the saint's way) is an attribute of divinity, the "perfect circle" in John Donne and others, and here the "virgin o." The eye of "cockshut eye" is both female sexual symbol and the mind's eye, recalling the dual function of "head." "Cockshut" suggests "cocksure," continuing the tone of line six. The clothing of process (dust) and of art (ice, the artifice of eternity) contrast with "glove" of line six, but will even they serve? Finally, "jacket" looks ahead to "straight," death will restrain and calm (the last stanzas of the poem express the thought that "everything ends . . .").

It may be objected that, in lines demanding so extensive a paraphrase and analysis, connotations have been spread too thin for coherence; that, whatever the poet's intent, a Surrealist poetry has in fact emerged. This is perhaps true of a few of Thomas' early poems; it is not true here. The rambling of the prose only commends the tautness of these stanzas. However difficult and diffuse an image may be, it is exact too, if its difficulty and diffuseness do not exceed that of the resemblance it embodies. The image is the resemblance, and non-metaphoric language cannot separate them; yet one notes how often, on the second or third reading, the verbal complexity of these "warring" images becomes a complexity of real relationship, an ambiguity of idea. Even where an image is cumulative in its effect ("virgin o" containing "maid" and "chaste" and adding to these), or where a single image has a multiple association ("spade-handed blood"), its quality is "exact" in this sense. Paraphrase can only approximate it.

In the early poems especially, it is not only the weight of each image, but also the way in which the images are brought together, that gives an appearance of automatism. The generative princi-

ple of the image, breeding the next, is always an extension of descriptive or symbolic content; the generative method, however, is very often an unashamed and inexhaustible word-play. The transition from image to image is by means of the pun, the double meaning, the coined word, the composite word, the noun-verb, the pronoun with a double antecedent. And there is a larger machinery, verbal and syntactical: clauses that read both forward and backward; uneven images that are smoothed by incantatory rhythms, rhymes, word patterns, verse forms, by the use of commas in place of full-stop punctuation; wrenched platitudes and clichés, the shifted word or words suggesting the image to follow; cant, slang terms and formal, general, abstract wording juxtaposed in image after image, so that the agitation of each becomes the repose of the group.

Thomas employs such devices often. The surface of many of his poems is, at first sight, hopelessly crowded and confused. It is undeniably a surface in motion, the images are kinesthetic, yet the movement seems induced by verbal ingenuities alone. A closer reading reveals the imagery to be substantial, its movement always conceptually controlled. One becomes aware how small a part the subconscious plays in this image-letting. The lines quoted above offer the interesting possibility of an image (perhaps, since it would have reached at least three lines, the originating one) that survived the ravages of revision only as a vestige. It was an image from card-playing jargon, if it existed, and it left behind its spade-handed blood; its sunday-poker face; the winning card up its sleeve, transformed to "dusters in my glove," perhaps the children driven up. The conjecture becomes less fanciful when Thomas' use of card-playing imagery elsewhere is considered, imagery expressive, as here, of a fraudulent attempt at salvation ("from Jesu's sleeve trumped up the king of spots . . . the fake gentleman in suit of spades," and the like).

It is surprising that the problem of residual imagery arises so seldom in this poetry, whose method is, as we have seen, cumulative, and grounded in "inevitable conflict." Where such images seem to have existed, they relate only generically to the images that replace them; there are few intrusions of meaning. Another difficulty is more often encountered. This residue is not of an image that has been worked out of a poem, but of an image that

shares some secondary quality with a similar image elsewhere. The shared quality disturbs the set of the imagery in both poems. The obscurity that results is different from the obscurity of Thomas' weighted images because it is not purposive, and because it is extrinsic, although not to the poetry, yet to the individual poem. Consider these lines from three poems:

*Child of the short spark in a shapeless country
Soon sets alight a long stick from the cradle;
The horizontal cross-bones of Abaddon,
You by the cavern over the black stairs,
Rung bone and blade, the verticals of Adam,
And, manned by midnight, Jacob to the stars . . .*
(TWIB, 53)

*Be by your one ghost pierced, his pointed ferrule,
Brass and the bodiless image, on a stick of folly
Star-set at Jacob's angle . . .* (SW, 18)

*Master the night nor serve the snowman's brain
That shapes each bushy item of the air
Into a polestar pointed on an icicle.* (SW, 45)

The images are sexual, mostly Freudian, similar in wording (the ladder-stick-icicle to a star) and subject (consummation). This is to say almost all that can be said of the first passage, almost nothing of the other two. The Old Testament imagery, in the first, is expressive of the sexual theme; the Freudian imagery is not expressive of a religious theme. The consummation is sexual; the child is "manned" by it. This sexual residue is left behind in the stick, the star of the second passage. But here the imagery is not primarily expressive of a sexual theme. The poem in which these lines appear is a vision of general and individual process. This consummation is of vision (at this point in the poem, of vision as illusion: "stick of folly"). In the third, the image is not Biblical, only secondarily sexual, although its terms are Freudian. The visionary is denied who sees the crystal in the melting flake. While this is similar to the theme of the second passage, the Biblical residue from the second only serves to blur the snowflake image. The residue is left, regardless of the order in which one encounters the passages. The accumulation is greatest from the third to the

first, for here a simple theme is complicated by the fuller uses to which the same imagery has been put in the other poems.

This is partly responsible for the difficulty that Robert Lowell has stated: "Icons and natural objects are often hard to tell apart." The harder, the more poems that are read. For the reader of one poem only, the problem of the extrinsic does not enter and the difficulty does not exist. The images in the poems are descriptive or symbolic; the two kinds are seldom found together. The resemblance in the descriptive image may be of natural objects to others:

*I lordly had the trees and leaves
Trail with daisies and barley
Down the rivers of the windfall light.* (SW, 79)

or of objects to emotions and ideas:

*I know her scrubbed and sour humble hands
Lie with religion in their cramp, her threadbare
Whisper in a damp word, her wits drilled hollow,
Her fist of a face died clenched on a round pain.* (SW, 32)

Thomas' symbols are counters from Freud, myth, magic, and the English "Metaphysicals." The referents are stable and familiar. There is, too, the larger symbolism, most often expressive of rational paradox, in extended figures and conceits:

*I, in my intricate image, stride on two levels,
Forged in man's minerals, the brassy orator
Laying my ghost in metal,
The scales of this twin world tread on the double,
My half ghost in armor hold hard in death's corridor,
To my man-iron side.* (SW, 16)

Because the ideas of this poem are paradoxical, the imagery is intricate. In a descriptive poem, such as "Fern Hill," the images are descriptive throughout. The sexual symbols in the lines beginning "Deliver me, my masters," pervade the lines of that poem. There is little confusion of icons with natural objects, then, in the individual poem. The difficulty is one of residue, in images that are employed descriptively in some poems and symbolically in others. For example, the image of the Jacob's ladder,

in two passages quoted above, "stands for" the sexual referent in one, but is descriptive—Jacob's vision resembles the vision of the poet, both grand, both illusory—in the second passage. And we shall later note a descriptive image in "Poem in October" that is obscured by the symbolic residue from similar images in other poems.

But Lowell's comment is meaningful in another sense, and may in fact be interpreted as a tribute to the internal consistency of Thomas' world. That world is organic, the same process activates all its parts:

*The force that through the green fuse drives the flower
Drives my green age; that blasts the roots of trees
Is my destroyer.
And I am dumb to tell the crooked rose
My youth is bent by the same wintry fever.* (SW, 5)

Insofar as they are subject to one force, the flower, the tree, and the poet are not only "in themselves," but also signs of each other and of the rest of the natural world. They are, in this special sense, both natural objects and icons; images in which they occur are descriptive and symbolic images. As the flower represents the poet, so it represents the process that moves them both; and conversely, all ranks of being are implicit in Thomas' descriptions of process:

*Here in this spring, stars float along the void;
Here in this ornamental winter
Down pelts the naked weather;
This summer buries a spring bird.
Symbols are selected from the years'
Slow rounding of four seasons' coasts.* (TWIB, 36)

It is within the scope of this "ideal synecdoche" (the phrase is Kenneth Burke's) that all Thomas' images move. Because of it, they often seem to be expressive not of resemblances, but of micro-macrocosmic identifications. The elusiveness of the word "like" in the following lines is the elusiveness of the distinction:

*Dawn breaks behind the eyes;
From poles of skull and toe the windy blood
Slides like a sea . . .*

*Night in the sockets rounds,
Like some pitch moon, the limit of the globes;
Day lights the bone.* (TWIB, 24)

But even where the images are slightest—as in the pure visual description of “Fern Hill”—they carry this symbolic weight of process. Process, then, is the basic theme of all Thomas’ poems. It is necessary to consider the idea of process more closely, through an examination of the images that express it.

III

The “meaning” of process, abstracted from the poems, is as simple as is, for Symons, the “meaning” of the poems. Process is unity in nature; its direction is the cyclical return; the force that drives it is the generative energy in natural things. Like the “motivating center” of a Thomas poem, it is “destructive and constructive at the same time”; so that not only do life and death imply each other:

*A darkness in the weather of the eye
Is half its light . . .
The seed that makes a forest of the loam
Forks half its fruit, and half drops down . . .* (SW, 14)

but they are in fact indistinguishable. As in Donne, “that which we call life is but a week of deaths.” The flesh as a shroud is a frequent image; frequent are such lines as

Bury the dead for fear that they walk to the grave in labor. (SW, 46)

In a poem which describes the progress of the sperm and the growth of the embryo, the birth of the child is their death:

*I dreamed my genesis in sweat of death, fallen
Twice in the feeding sea, grown
Stale of Adam’s brine until, vision
Of new man strength, I seek the sun.* (SW, 15)

In other poems, the sun is both “meat-eating,” of death, and the “arising prodigal Sun the father,” of life, of rebirth by generation. The worm destroys and creates: it “wear(s) the quick away” in one poem, and “builds . . . my nest of mercies” in

another. For Donne, again, "the womb and the grave are but one point, they make but one station"; and in a poem by Thomas, a woman speaks to her unborn child:

... *No return
Through the waves of the fat streets nor the skeleton's
thin ways.
The grave and my calm body are shut to your coming as
stone,
And the endless beginning of prodigies suffers open.*
(SW, 39)

With the breakdown of the life and death duality, all the basic antitheses implicit in the words "flux" and "absolute" are also necessarily reconciled. Thus Rilke, whose themes those of Thomas resemble, is able to pass without transition from the statement of one idea to the statement of the other, when he writes:

Affirmation of life and affirmation of death reveal themselves as one. . . .
The true form of life extends through both regions, the blood of the
mightiest circulation pulses through both: there is neither a here nor a
beyond, but only the great unity. . . .⁴

And thus for Thomas the "beyond" is "here," the absolute is located in the flux:

... *I am dumb to tell a weather's wind
How time has ticked a heaven round the stars.* (SW, 5)
*The masses of the infant-bearing sea
Erupt, fountain, and enter to utter forever
Glory glory glory
The sundering ultimate kingdom of genesis' thunder.*
(SW, 68)

Water and sky often meet in images and symbols of absolute-in-flux. Thomas works variations into the pattern. Birds wing their way through a congeries of marine imagery:

The shipyards . . . hide a navy of doves. (SW, 65)
Always good luck, praised the finned in the feather bird.
(SW, 57)

⁴In a letter cited in the "Commentary" to *Duino Elegies*, Norton, 1939. The lines quoted later from the poem follow, in the main, this Spender-Leishman translation.

The she bird . . . sails the goose plucked sea. (SW, 85)

Elsewhere, the sky spouts gushers, the sea flies, anchors ride like gulls, birds of burden are heavy with the drowned, and "over the glazed lakes skate the shapes of fishes flying." A characteristic bird is the shearwater, which skims the sea in flight, a characteristic phenomenon the waterspout, a whirlwind of spray and mist.

Thomas pays process the respect that is an absolute's due by expressing it often in the traditional images of devotion and quest. The sacrament is almost always a worldly partaking. In four images from three poems, time is a grail, gospel, saint, and priest; other images bring together the heavens and heaven, tear and church, snow and parish, grave and font, dust and savior. In the Biblical imagery itself, Christ is "Jack Christ," "Jack of Christ": his passion is Everyman's. There is a frequent identification of Christ with Adam, and, generally, of Christian imagery with the imagery of process.

A usual function of Biblical imagery is neglected by Thomas. In these poems Satan never tempts, Adam never falls, stern gods never lay down laws; redemption is generation, the Judgment is the day of death, of re-immersion in process. Morality is a theme for only two poems. In one of these, there is the allusion:

*The wisemen tell me that the garden gods
Twined good and evil on an eastern tree . . .*

and the dismissal:

*We in our Eden knew the secret guardian
In sacred waters that no frost could harden,
And in the mighty mornings of the earth . . .* (TWIB, 34)

The other poem is as bare of imagery and as close to public statement as a poem by Thomas can be. Despite the elegaic tone and tread, one suspects that Thomas is here defining a position in order to have done with it:

*Good and bad, two ways
Of moving about your death . . .
Blow away like breath,
Go crying through you and me*

*And the souls of all men
 Into the innocent
 Dark, and the guilty dark, and good
 Death, and bad death . . .
 And all your deeds and words,
 Each truth, each lie,
 Die in unjudging love.* (SW, 87)

Yet he has not wholly committed himself. The title of the poem is "This Side of the Truth"; and to write of "the innocent dark, and the guilty dark," the "good death, and bad death," is, the beat on "dark" and "death" notwithstanding, in some way to distinguish them. There is evidence, in the imagery of the later poems and in the prose statements, that Thomas' world is developing. The nature of the development will be discussed later. It is at least possible that it constitutes for Thomas the other side of the truth of process; and that, further, he considers it to be intrinsically moral: the greater its extent, the "better." But whether or not this development exists, the chief theme of Thomas' Biblical imagery remains one of celebration, and not of choice.

IV

The affirmation of process has been stressed. Yet there are other images, expressive of process, which have a sharply contrasting tone. Time, the pursued, becomes the pursuer in images that recall Marvell's "winged chariot":

When, like a running grave, time tracks you down . . .
 (SW, 6)

*Time, in a folly's rider, like a county man
 Over the vault of ridings with his bound at heel,
 Drives forth my men, my children, from the hanging
 south.* (SW, 41)

In three early images, life is a sore, time or death an acid that will burn it out. As Marshall Stearns points out, the sexual imagery of the early poems is sometimes an imagery of almost psychopathic revulsion:

*An old man's shank one-marrowed with my bone,
And all the herrings smelling in the sea,
I sit and watch the worm beneath my nail
Wearing the quick away.* (TWIB, 17)

The moon, its reflected light, its sea-flux influence, is symbolic of the seeming, but illusory, transcendence of death by the artist, the Christian, the lover. The "carved bird," undying artifact, recurs often in these images; and, in one of the few direct echoes in Thomas' poetry, Yeats's Byzantium is recalled and rejected:

*Moonfall and sailing emperor, pale as their tide-print,
Hear by death's accident the clocked and dashed-down
spire
Strike the sea hour through bellmetal.* (SW, 29)

The theme of art as illusion, faith as illusion, finds its most concise expression in the short poem "The spire cranes":

*... Its statue is an aviary.
From the stone nest it does not let the feathery
Carved birds blunt their striking throats on the salt
gravel . . .* (SW, 31)

The aviary, contrived and confining, is the "artifice of eternity" as it appears to Thomas. The comment in "feathery/carved" is clear. The poem ends:

*Those craning birds are choice for you, songs that jump
back
To the built voice, or fly with winter to the bells,
But do not travel down dumb wind like prodigals.*

The poet implies the choice is none, since both art and faith ("nightingale and psalm" in another poem, the "voice" and "bells" here) are illusory when they deny process.

It is the vision of process that transforms the early imagery of denial ("carved bird," moon, dark, disease, and the sexual images) to the later imagery of affirmation (sun, Son, the Biblical and devotional images):

*These once-blind eyes have breathed a wind of visions . . .
And, mild as pardon from a cloud of pride,
The terrible world my brother bares his skin.* (SW, 27)

It sees the absolute-in-flux, and not an absolute of illusion; process, and not the individual life or death. As in the lines from "Vision and Prayer,"

*... I am lost in the blinding
One. The sun roars at the prayer's end,* (SW, 75)

the "I" is lost in the "One." The function of vision is to point the Way:

*... Seasons must be challenged or they totter
Into a chiming quarter
Where, punctual as death, we ring the stars ...* (SW, 3)

*Murmur of spring nor crush the cockerel's eggs,
Nor hammer back a season in the figs,
But graft these four-fruited ridings on your country ...*
(SW, 45)

Birth, copulation, or death, as the season demands; but the theme is not one for Symons' catalogue. A revelation, it is expressed in images of revelation. The coming of vision is likened to the breaking of day. Hymen and caul, shell and chrysalis (and, once removed, the "film of eye," the "cataracted eye") are also broken in images of consummation and conception, or of birth. In more recent poems, the daybreak images remain, but the related sexual cluster has been replaced by images involving "locks." John Berryman has remarked the prevalence of this imagery. The locks are of an illusory art or faith:

*There was a saviour
Rarer than radium
Commoner than water, crueller than truth ...
Prisoners of wishes locked their eyes
In the jails and studies of his keyless smiles.* (SW, 48)

Because keys are either unavailable or ineffectual, the locks are broken by vision or by death, for process is reaffirmed by both:

*When the morning was waking over the war
He put on his clothes and stepped out and he died,
The locks yawned loose and a blast blew them wide ...
And the craters of his eyes grew springshoots and fire
When all the keys shot from the locks and rang.* (SW, 51)

V

But to celebrate in vision is not to reconcile in fact. The problem of reconciliation—of the individual with the general process—is a major theme in Thomas. More than any other, the theme sets his poetry apart from the poetry of the Neo-Romantics, whose Gothic landscapes cannot sustain an imagery of paradox. In a brilliant conceit, Thomas distinguishes the two movements:

*Let the wax disc babble
Shames and the damp dishonors, the relic scraping.
These are your years' recorders. The circular world stands
still.* (SW, 18)

The recording and the turn-table that supports it move together, but there is another movement: the needle moves across the recording and plays it, the babble of the individual life ("all your deeds and words, each truth, each lie") is played out and begun again, while process turns back upon itself perpetually. Donne, in one of his sermons, employs a similar figure, to express the difference of life on earth from life in heaven:

This life is a circle, made with a compass, that passes from point to point; that life is a circle stamped with a print, an endless, and perfect circle, as soon as it begins.

Thomas' "circular world" is Donne's "perfect circle" analogized to time and space.

This, then, is the mystic plight; Thomas cannot escape an individual history by a vision of continuity:

*"Who could snap off the shapeless print
From your tomorrow-treading shade
With oracle for eye? . . .
Who could back out your unsucked heart,
O green and unborn and undead?"
I saw time murder me.* (SW, 23)

He makes use of a richly varied imagery to express the idea that what is seen by vision as duration is, in terms of the individual life, only the sum of intervals. In "Then was my neophyte," the image is of a motion picture film, run off in reels. In "Light breaks where no sun shines," men's lives are "waste allotments."

In "Especially when the October wind," the "busy heart . . . sheds the syllabic blood." "Busy" here suggests the "red veins full of money" elsewhere, blood to be portioned out in payment for measures of life. In another poem, the flesh is a

*pinned-around-the-spirit
Cut-to-measure . . .
Suit for a serial sum
On the first of each hardship . . .* (SW, 61)

The poem begins, significantly, "once *below* a time."

Two of Thomas' recent poems have the death of a child as their subject. In "A Refusal to Mourn," continuity is affirmed, but with the loss of compassion for the individual death:

*I shall not murder
The mankind of her going with a grave truth . . .
After the first death, there is no other.* (SW, 89)

In "Ceremony After a Fire Raid," the tension is more finely adjusted:

*Forgive
Us forgive
Us your death that myselfes the believers
May hold it in a great flood
Till the blood shall spurt,
And the dust shall sing like a bird
As the grains blow, as your death grows, through our
heart.* (SW, 66)

Another aspect of the problem is that of the mystic, who celebrates the whole of life in vision, but lives in the realm of choice; of the artist, as observer and as participant:

*My man of leaves and the bronze root, mortal, unmortal,
I, in my fusion of rose and male motion . . .* (SW, 16)

*How shall my animal . . .
Who should be furious,
Drunk as a vineyard snail, flailed like an octopus,
Roaring, crawling, quarrel
With the outside weathers,* —

*The natural circle of the discovered skies
Draw down to its weird eyes?* (SW, 34)

The snail is a frequent image: it feeds on one vine of the vineyard; its horns are the horns of the one-many dilemma. A descriptive image in "Poem in October" has a non-descriptive implication for the reader who recalls Thomas' use of similar imagery elsewhere:

*Pale rain over the dwindling harbor
And over the sea wet church the size of a snail
With its horns through mist . . .* (SW, 77)

The theme is implicit in the short poem "The Marriage of a Virgin." A man replaces the sun or the Son, pagan or Christian god, as the virgin's lover. This is the first of the two stanzas:

*Walking alone in a multitude of loves when morning's
light
Surprised in the opening of her nightlong eyes
His golden yesterday asleep upon the iris
And this day's sun leapt up the sky out of her thighs
Was miraculous virginity old as loaves and fishes,
Though the moment of a miracle is unending lightning
And the shipyards of Galilee's footprints hide a navy of
doves.* (SW, 65)

John Sweeney has shown its source to be a stanza from Marvell's "The Gallery"; dawn, thighs, manna ("loaves and fishes"), and dove appear in both:

*But, on the other side, th' art drawn
Like to Aurora in the dawn;
When in the East she slumb'ring lies,
And stretches out her milky thighs;
While all the morning quire does sing,
And manna falls, and roses spring;
And, at thy feet, the wooing doves
Sit perfecting their harmless loves.*

The changes worked by Thomas are significant. It is the mystic who consorts with god, who lives in the "moment," "unending" although "old" in time ("the still point of the turning

world" in Eliot). It is the artist who celebrates without participation, "alone in a multitude of loves," as Christ with the multitude. This is the second stanza:

*No longer will the vibrations of the sun desire on
Her deepsea pillow where once she married alone,
Her heart all ears and eyes, lips catching the avalanche
Of the golden ghost who ringed with his streams her mer-
cury bone,
Who under the lids of her windows hoisted his golden
luggage,
For a man sleeps where fire leapt down and she learns
through his arm
That other sun, the jealous coursing of the unrivalled blood.*

"Alone" is repeated. The imagery suggests the method ("her heart all ears and eyes") and responsibility ("luggage" in its original meaning a heavy burden) of the artist, and the mystic oneness with experience (by implying a reversal of the sexual roles: the ghost "rings" her "mercury bone"; and mercury is the male theosophical symbol). Finally, with the multitude gone, blood is "unrivalled" (both senses) yet "jealous." The shift, then, is not only from god to man, but from the one to the one-of-many, from celebration to choice.

Thomas has treated in several poems the theme of the mystic, saint, angel, savior who has "fallen." In most of these, it is an illusory art or faith, and not the vision of process, that has been overcome; this is irrelevant here. In them, the images descriptive of life after the fall are very often images of confrontation, conflict, choice:

*Cry joy that this witchlike midwife second . . .
Makes with a flick of the thumb and sun
A thundering bullring of your silent and girl-circled
island.* (SW, 37)

*. . . To love and labor and kill
In quick, sweet, cruel light till the locked ground sprout
out.* (SW, 34)

Now in the dark there is only yourself and myself.
(SW, 48)

Perhaps too much has been made of the point. Certainly, in these poems, as in all Thomas' work, the imagery of unity far exceeds the imagery of plurality. Yet it is important to indicate Thomas' awareness of all the implications of vision, to note that he has made of them subjects for some of his finest poems.

There is some evidence in the imagery of the later poems that vision not only celebrates process, but informs it. Thomas writes: "Man be my metaphor." Man, as part of the natural world, is subject to process too, and their resemblance in this allows the poet to speak of external nature in terms of man. But man is Thomas' metaphor in another sense. The consciousness of man shapes the natural world by its awareness of it; man is the metaphor through which the qualities of things find expression:

*O who is glory in the shapeless maps,
Now make the world of me as I have made
A merry manshape of your walking circle.* (SW, 45)

The images of flux are often qualified by adjectival interpreters:

*Am I not all of you by the directed sea
Where bird and shell are babbling in my tower?* (SW, 44)
Your heart is luminous in the watched dark. (SW, 63)
Dust be your saviour under the conjured soil. (SW, 18)

In "Ceremony After a Fire Raid," Thomas laments the death of a child

*Who was priest and servants,
Word, singers, and tongue
In the cinder of the little skull,
Who was the serpent's
Nightfall and the fruit like a sun,
Man and woman undone,
Beginning crumbled back to darkness . . .* (SW, 67)

The singer is the word; the dancer, as in Yeats, the dance; the garden disappears when the lovers leave it. In "Vision and Prayer" the life cycle, "spiral of ascension" (compare Yeats's "gyre"), is transformed from a process in suspense to one weighted

with light by "the happening of saints to their vision," by "turn (ing) / the corner of prayer and burn(ing) / In a blessing of the sudden/ Sun." Process, the subject of vision, needs man to "happen" to it to give it life. On another level, Thomas' descriptive imagery is often in the fanciful terms of a consciousness that stays and a world that comes and goes, as in these lines from "Fern Hill":

*As I rode to sleep the owls were bearing the farm away . . .
And then to awake, and the farm, like a wanderer white
With the dew, come back, the cock on his shoulder.*
(SW, 79)

Even in the death of childhood, it is the physical scene that is remiss:

. . . the farm forever fled from the childless land.

In "Poem in October," the transformer is memory:

*Here were fond climates and sweet singers suddenly
come . . .
And the blue altered sky
Streamed again a wonder of summer.* (SW, 76)

So that, not only in his idea of process, but also in his idea of man as the informer of process, Thomas is close to Rilke. The mind animates things. Rilke speaks for both poets in this passage from a letter:

Transitoriness is everywhere plunging into a profound being . . . In a purely mundane, deeply mundane, blissfully mundane consciousness, to instate what is here seen and touched within the wider, within the widest orbit—that is what is required. Not within a beyond, whose shadow darkens the earth, but within a whole.

This prose casts a shadow of its own; and the idea is nowhere explicitly stated by Thomas. But many of his poems express it "exactly," in images that are also Rilke's. The closeness in theme and imagery of Thomas' "Map of Love: Four" to parts of the "Second Duino Elegy" suggests that Rilke's poem may have been the source of Thomas'. Whether or not this is true, the lines differ sufficiently to make the comparison of them meaningful.

The lovers of the "Elegy" are unable to arrest process by their love:

Someone may say:

"You are in my blood, the room, the Spring grows full of you" . . .

He cannot retain you . . .

You pass by everything like a transposition of air.

This is the problem:

*. . . to discover some pure, contained
narrow, human, own small strip of orchard
between river and rock. For our heart transcends us.*

It is resolved in the later elegies. The "river" is itself transformed to "rock" by the "blissfully mundane consciousness" of man. Life and death are ultimately contained by vision; the consciousness of the external becomes the consciousness of self. Despite himself, Rilke has left the "mundane" far behind. The narrow strip that he discovers is in fact an idealist eternity. But the textures of things are too much with Thomas to permit him to resolve the problem in this way. The following lines are from "Map of Love: Four":

*We lying by seas and, watching yellow
And the grave sea, mock who deride
Who follow the red rivers, hollow
Alcove of words out of cicada shade,
For in this yellow grave of sand and sea
A calling for color calls with the wind
That's grave and gay as grave and sea
Sleeping on either hand.
The lunar silences . . . the dry tide-master
Ribbed between desert and water storm,
Should cure our ills of the water
With a one-colored calm . . .
Bound by the sovereign strip, we lie
Watch yellow, wish for wind to blow away
The strata of the shore and drown red rock;
But wishes breed not, neither
Can we fend off rock arrival,*

*Lie watching yellow until the golden weather
Breaks, O my heart's blood, like a heart and hill.*

Much of this is familiar: lovers "lie"; the way of the lover and the poet is the same (by the circular "mock who deride who follow . . . [who] hollow"); the moon "should" cure but does not. The imagery accumulates: the blood, heart, dawn, and calm all partake of the "red" of river and rock; the day, heart, storm, and strata-hill "break" together. But the theme is that of the "Elegy," with this difference: vision does not contain, it informs, process. The lovers "lie watching" (three times repeated) until yellow becomes gold, night becomes day. Process is already the "sovereign" (golden) strip, joining river and rock, in line thirteen. The transformation is effected only when, in the last two lines, vision sees it as such.

To bolster the metaphoric with non-metaphoric props is a questionable practice; yet it is interesting to note that the idea that "Map of Love: Four" embodies is an important one in the German philosophers after Kant. To Coleridge, writing under their influence, poetry is "true idealism necessarily perfecting itself in realism, realism refining itself into idealism." And when Thomas, acknowledging the influence of Freud, speaks of

. . . the record of my individual struggle from darkness towards some measure of light . . . To be stripped of darkness is to be clean, to strip of darkness is to make clean. . . . My poetry is, or should be, useful to others for its individual recording of that same struggle with which they are necessarily acquainted. . . .

he is perhaps as close to these men as he is to Freud. The phrasing recalls that of the idealists: the identification of the "individual" with the general movement; the "necessity" of the movement (implicitly contrasted with the "freedom" which is its end); and the coupling of words for passion and action, for the self and the external ("to be stripped . . . to strip," "to be . . . to make"). Considering, in the light of Thomas' statement, the various redemption themes in the later poems, and the gradual shift in imagery discussed above—from the dark, dense, and Freudian images to the clearer, sparser, Christian and mythic images—one may inquire whether his dialectical method of composition does not in fact correspond to a dialectic of real movement in his

world. It is not impossible to fit the linear "struggle from darkness towards . . . light" to the "creative, recreative, destructive, and contradictory nature of the motivating center" of the earlier quotation. Process, the cyclical return, is not denied by the idea; it requires only that the mind of man evolve an ever fuller relationship with it.

But a poem is not a program; the development will only be such as is embodied in the imagery of the poems. If Thomas is indeed moving toward some measure of realist-idealist reconciliation, his next poems may be expected to contain fewer, but more extensive, images; and, within the image itself, an empathetic identification of objects and ideas, of objects and emotions:

*. . . gesture and psalm
Storm me forever over her grave until
The stuffed lung of the fox twitch and cry Love
And the strutting fern lay seeds on the black sill.*

(SW, 33)

Abstracted from the world of the poems, the ideas I have considered are meaningless. Criteria that are applicable to them as ideas are inapplicable to them as ideas embodied in images. Yet to trace them is to say a great deal in answer to critics of Thomas' "black magical bubblings" (Grigson), his "rhetorical and intellectual fakes" (Symons), and to those of his admirers who damn him with diffuse praise. Thomas is a poet who thinks; he deserves to be read as much for his sense as for his sound and fury.

Three Poems

JOSEPH BENNETT

PHAROS

Divine song fills the spaceless dunes,
Running soft along the wave.
Divine song flutters the diving loons,
Flush in the surf's long architrave.
Papyrus buds on the strand engrave
Fronds in the curve of the cryptic shore
Where burial lands in bays enclave
Seas that swarm with albacore.

Wax exudes from the soft cocoons
Of mummies bland in the fibrous grave;
Pure arabic, to form lagoons
From bodies washed in the shallow cave.
Tallows fluxed from wrappings lave
Clays that blend with prongs of ore
Where throned and vast the dead kings waive
Seas that swarm with albacore.

Sire, the dunes have filled the nave,
Flowing up from the ocean floor,
And godheads with their lips enslave
Seas that swarm with albacore.

ISHTAR

Wave-born Ishtar
On a ship's wings;
Curving the prow,
The waters white.

The eyes of the vessel
Bearing you on
Thread the foam in the day,
The stars at night.

Seas, seas about you
In the milky dark;
Seas rise about your conch
Through distances of sky.

Flowing sister, wave-born,
The radiances of night
Burn pale eyes to your velvet
Cruising of shoals,

And some sailors, drowning,
Call out the fish-tailed Name.
For them the waters turn aglow
And salt, forced inward, soothes the pain.

OSIRIS

Waxen white as the body of a lily
The effigies in coffins rise.
The noise of women wailing
Curtails the garland luxuries.

The knell in Alexandria
Is thick among the dull perfumes.
The heavy flesh is ivory
Carved to fit the leaking tombs.

The resurrection of the god
Proceeds before the marketplace.
A bandaged arm, a gilded mask
Uplifted in its mummy-case.

And all must face that stuprous eye
Protruding from an earth-mauled head,
And all support that blunted gaze
Fixed within its linen web.

Winding through the underworld
A cry comes up from the watchman Dog.
Anubis claims the Blessed One.
A corpse moves brightly through the streets.

The Martyr

HOWARD O. SACKLER

Magnificent before his gaze there rolled,
Like tethered moons, his perfect spectacles;
And as he spoke and nursed his palm upon
His working breast, his eyes ignored the moons
And turned themselves on us.

The clock struck nine.

"These are most grim and naked days," he said,
"We few, we who instruct our acts apart
From market places and the tyranny
Of awesome mixtures and fantastic vessels,
We must strike our blazing flag above
The grimmer and more naked days ahead.
This is more than to endure," he said,
"More than to plant a life beside a doorstep
And thank the seasons for its sustenance."

Pausing, he embraced the water-glass
And drank enormously, as if the clamors
Of a thirsty corps that manned his voice
Had interrupted.

"And to guard those grim
And naked days, our spirits must be as shields,
Cleaving and scattering the storm's assault
That blasts our minions' parasols. We must
Be more than meager parasols," he said,
"More than the silks and sticks above one head
That challenge only mists and easy rains."

Impatiently, he ran his handkerchief
Around his teeming face, patting each crease
As if he blotted cowering rebels there.

“Further,” he said, “our anxious spirits must
Wield our very deaths like branding-irons,
Descending with more zeal than sentiment;
We few, whose vigilance is moored in heaven,
Must flay the sentimental tissue from
The heaving multitude, and then expire,
Stamping great holidays into their souls.”

He grimaced about the room, fondling his earlobe
And closely marshalling his teeth, as if
Accusers battled to break from within.

“Help, then, some tactful murderers to devise
Our ends thus; before many men, but yet
Without the families, the moans, the scenes,
The weak distractions of a public death.
This must be surer than the stakes or lions
Cheered by the raucous feast-day crowds,” he said,
“More than the love-wild wizards pelted by
The lunches, faggots and mischievous praise;
Sane deaths must govern grim and naked days.”

The heavy clock hands circled on the wall;
One held a rubber dagger, and the other
Held one of steel; he spoke till midnight and
Few of us marked their treacherous exchange
As he concluded, and his warm eyes set behind
Their lunar lenses.

When handclasps were served,
I hurried out, thinking about the circus—
How he would be, on one fierce night, aroused
From bed and taken to the monstrous tent,
Hooted past freaks, hawkers and baboons,
And bundled, clad in bathrobe and denials,
Into the painted cannon.

Two Poems

E. STAMBLER

SESTINA MEZZO FORTE

Here is a picture we have all been painting,
Here we have strained our ears in vain for music,
Where we have walked or crept instead of dancing,
Where we have mined the sky till it is hollow—
And still we search it with our vacant faces,
And still we turn them hopefully to mirrors.

There is a mad security in mirrors:
Ghosts of Narcissus using arts of painting
Do not accept inevitable faces;
Tuning their ear-nerves, blunt, to dying music
They set their eyes off by a rosy hollow
And drag their limbs in mimicry of dancing.

All dancing is a mimicry of dancing,
But there is some not visible to mirrors,
Which celebrate but do not know to hallow
As nearly as can be achieved in painting,
Which still is wanting lacking ancient music—
This dancing has deserted all our faces.

Each is cast out upon a sea of faces,
Tossed on the face of rock is all their dancing.
Driven by howling winds, undersea music,
Broken waves break across pools as mirrors.
No more drowned faces! Let wave troughs be hollow!
Set coral on an island for a painting.

There need not be precision in a painting,
Done to preserve a little life of faces:
Color and line are not to fill the hollow,

But to make units which approach the dancing
As cries and laughter have some tone of music—
As reassurance can be found in mirrors.

Crowds, ranged behind us as we probe our mirrors,
Framed in gilt and cupids, join the painting;
Here is a waiting hush vibrates like music:
A foreign landscape basks within their faces.
Should a voice cry suddenly "The mirror is hollow!"
They would turn to one another their eyes dancing.

Perdita, all my sight is hollow; our eye-mirrors
Understood best of painting, long ago, our faces.
You were once dancing where I made you music.

ANNIVERSARY

I put up for my father's deathday
A painting of a crucifixion,
Not Renaissance, where clarity
And color and gesture can turn gay;

But of Decadence; yet not that
Delicate and experimental sort,
But late, assured, and formed:
To heavy bones lying two years appropriate.

My mother saw and lips twitched
And hands twitched and she said,
"Why, today?" And I said, "Your life
Has by no master been enriched."

Rabbits' and butterflies' light breath
Is free; they wonderfully multiply:
If any break this starry flow, "Death,"
Reason sings, and descants, "Death."

English Verse Drama (II):

The Cocktail Party

WILLIAM ARROWSMITH

. . . in the perusal of this treatise, you shall find another kind of taste, and a doctrine of more profound consideration, which will disclose unto you the most glorious doctrine and dreadful mysteries, as well in what concerneth our religion, as matters of the public state.

—Rabelais, Prologue to *Gargantua*

FOR DEPTH, for richness, *The Cocktail Party* is not what we ordinarily call a “popular” play; yet it has been popular and has competed for some time with lesser plays on the commercial stage. This popularity—much of it—seems partly the accident of Eliot’s having recently come to be “in fashion.” Nonetheless, I believe it was the author’s intention to write a play which could manage to be profound at the same time it was popular (or, in Eliot’s terms, a play that was Christian at the same time that it was secular in form). By such a play, I do not mean one that is written for two separate audiences, one Christian and the other secular, but a Christian play in secular dress, so constructed that it should be possible for a neutral and intelligent (not “intellectual”) reader to penetrate to the Christian interior from the secular surface. Such a play is possible only if Eliot’s conviction that we still live in a partially (even unconsciously) Christian world is true; if not, the play must be, for our time at least, a failure. It will also be a failure if it permits any compromise of value; this is automatic since the kind of play I think Eliot has in mind is a play which, because it achieves its ends not by “writing down,” but by writing “in depth,” in body, cannot compromise. The risks of this method are enormous,—and so are the stakes involved.

If we are to understand this method, it is essential that we should understand what the play is about. One thing the play is

about is actual Christian life and the dramatic creation of a possible Christian society; it is this aspect of the play which has not been sufficiently understood, especially in detail. And whether or not we happen to share Mr. Eliot's religious views (I do not), it is impossible to judge the play or its relevance to a possible theater until the play has been, to a point, understood.

II

Even a glance at the *dramatis personae* will show us that there is more to the play than meets the eye. Remembering the "Guardians," it is perhaps mere coincidence that both Edward (ead-ward) and Alex (*alex*-andros) are etymologically "guardians," "defenders." Lavinia is, of course, an eponym; but it is curious that in its classical locus, the *Aeneid*, it is almost invariably accompanied by the apposition, *coniunx*. Quilpe is too odd: it is merely an archaic variant of the word "whelp"; or, as we would say, Quilpe is "Peter the Pup" ("There is one for whom the words cannot be spoken . . . yet"). And, if you wish to push things, *Coplestone* and *Shuttlethwaite* and *Chamberlayne* will all yield some kind of sense when broken up and attached to their bearers. But all these are merely minor means of enriching a text; they are not, in themselves, dramatically relevant or particularly revealing.

It is the name *Celia*, among the Christian names, that is revealing. Offhand, one would guess that it came from *caelia* and meant "lady of heaven," and this would be appropriate although, in fact, the etymology is a false one. But *Celia* is short for *Cecilia*, and the name *Cecilia* is a Christian name because it was hallowed by the life of St. Cecilia, Virgin and Martyr. Clearly, there is an immediate resemblance between the saint and her namesake of the play. But there is more to it than that. Consider the full traditional meaning of the Christian name, *Cecilia*. It is given at the beginning of the saint's life in *The Golden Legend* of De Voragine, Englished by Caxton:

Cecilia is as much to say as the lily of heaven, or a way to blind men. Or she is said of celo, that is heaven, and leos, that is people. She was a heavenly lily by cleanness of virginity, a way to blind men by information of example, heaven by devout contemplation, lia by busy operation, lacking blindness by shining of wisdom, and heaven of the people.

This etymology, too, is forced and false, but it is nonetheless operative: it is the meaning of the *Christian* name, Cecilia, if you grant names to have meaning. But it is not so much the *cael*-root (heavenly) as the *caec*-root (blind)—turned by the martyrologist to “lacking blindness” and “a way to blind men”—that is immediately important. For it is the related metaphors of sight and blindness, dark and light, which are the major imagery of the play.

Consider Edward’s “And what is the use of all your analysis/If I am to remain always in the dark?”; Julia’s “I must have left my glasses here,/and I simply can’t see a thing without them/. . . But I’d know them, because one lens is missing”; Reilly’s “And me bein’ the One Eyed Riley . . .”; Celia’s “I can see you at last as a human being” followed by Edward’s “I’m completely in the dark”; Julia’s “You must have learned to look at people, Peter/. . . That is, when you’re not concerned with yourself/But just being an eye”; or this little sequence:

JULIA: *Well, my dears, I shall see you very soon.*

EDWARD: *When shall we see you?*

JULIA: *Did I say you’d see me?*

And there are at least a dozen more such (unobtrusive) visual metaphors. Finally, consider that Cecilia means “lacking blindness” and that Celia is said to have gone the “way of illumination.”

If, by metaphor, Edward and Lavinia (and Peter, and Celia at first) are said to be, in their own words, “completely in the dark,” and Celia soon goes the “way of illumination,” what are we to make of Reilly and Julia and Alex? Julia is said to be “very observant,” but she cannot (she says) see without her glasses, and one lens is missing: she is effectively blind in one eye, a literal monocle. In response to her query, Reilly sings “And me bein’ the One Eyed Riley.” Actually, Reilly’s song is Eliot’s variant upon a well-known and thoroughly obscene RAF song; but “One Eyed” is, so far as I know, Eliot’s own invention and clearly applies to Reilly. We have then three metaphorical conditions: blindness, half-sight, and full vision, typified by Edward, Julia (and her partners), and Celia, in that order. What, however, the half-sight of Julia and Reilly means is to be found, like so much else in *The Cocktail Party*, in a proverb: *In the kingdom of the blind the one-eyed man is king*. And there may be a fur-

ther gloss in this incident from *The Golden Legend*, under the life of St. Edward:

Thirty days after his burying, there came to his tomb a man which had but one eye, leading after him six blind men, and each of them held other by the skirt. And they all devoutly prayed to God . . . that they might have their sight . . . And anon as they had ended their prayers all they received perfectly their sight. And then each of them that had been blind looked fast on each other, and thought it a new world with them.

In any case, the passage should illustrate what the intent of the imagery is: the parable of a *moral* miracle, the recovery of sight.

If we understand Reilly and Julia (and Alex) as the "one-eyed in the kingdom of the blind," we should be able to discover their true position in the play. Most criticism of the play has found the position of these "Guardians" somewhat ambiguous. They have seemed to be, now semi-divine, now entirely human, now mechanical abstractions for divided selves and, most often, an unresolved mixture of saint and sinner. Most of these charges of poor conceptualization have arisen, I think, because critics have made the mistake of taking the statements of any character about another as literally true. Assent has generally followed Edward's description of Julia as "that dreadful old woman," and it has certainly been intended by the dramatist that we should assent—to a point. Against Edward's description of Julia, however, we have to balance the more appreciative remarks of Celia and Peter. Nonetheless, Julia certainly *appears* to be a "dreadful old woman," a frivolous busybody, throughout the first act; she certainly *seems* to be radically different from the Julias of Acts II and III. And it is this seeming difference which has led critics and audiences to suppose that there is an impossible gulf between these two Julias; that the early Julia is a fantastic distortion of the later and more saintly Julia. In fact there should be no question of divinity, or of divided selves, or of an *unaccountable* change of character.¹ This emerges quite clearly if we remember that Reilly, in his in-

¹I am perhaps stressing what may have seemed obvious to many readers. But the two most common misunderstandings of the play have been (a) that the "Guardians" are divine or semi-divine figures controlling the lives of the others, or (b) that the "Guardians" suffer so remarkable a metamorphosis between Acts I and Acts II and III that it can only be accounted for by supposing that they are ordinary human beings in Act I and demigods in Acts II and III—or outer selves and then inner selves. This last view has claimed the respect of a reviewer

terview with Celia, discloses that he was at the party "at the instance of Mrs. Shuttlethwaite." As this line is spoken, the audience should suddenly feel the scales drop from its eyes, should see that it has been guilty, like Edward, of imposing its own myth upon the characters. For if we think back, we will remember that Julia has denied knowing Reilly ("Edward, who is that dreadful man?") when she clearly must have known him well enough to invite him. Reilly can have no purpose in lying to Celia about the manner of his coming to the party. It is Julia who is lying or, more accurately, playing a part, and playing it well. So, for that matter are Reilly and Alex playing parts, and it should be clear that the part they are playing has something to do with their being "Guardians." In Act II, when Reilly worries about Edward and Lavinia, "stripped naked to their souls," Julia replies: "Nonsense, Henry, I shall keep an eye on them." In fact, she has never kept her (one) eye very much off them; it is this benevolent watching (shared with Alex) which makes her seem to both Edward and the audience a professional busybody.

This illusion has been composed with great subtlety. In the first place, Eliot has postponed our knowledge of the kindly conspiracy of "Guardians" and allowed us, throughout Act I, to take our measure of Julia and her fellow-conspirators from the eyes of purblind Edward and Lavinia. Second, he has made a persuasive appeal to that convention which seemed most likely to lull the audience's suspicions. That convention is the slick comedy of marital misunderstanding with its rigid "laugh" types: the ubiquitous, tiresome Scot who "knows everybody" (MacColgie

in so clear-sighted a journal as *Scrutiny*: "Julia and Alex have a striking metamorphosis from their original selves. This is so palpable that it must be intentional, and we are . . . intended to take Edward's remark about 'the guardian' as a clue showing how to accept the convention. In the light of this the Julia and Alex of Acts II and III are presumably the inner selves of their analogues in Act I, and not real people at all." This preposterous conclusion could have been avoided had the reviewer asked himself: (1) At whose request was Reilly at the party? (2) Why, if Julia had invited Reilly, did she deny knowing him? (3) Is the Julia of Act I *really* different from the Julia of Act III, or is the change ascribable to a game she is playing as well as a change in the eyes of the others? But see above. It is true, however, that Edward's reference to "the guardian" is rather misleading. What Eliot means by this personal "guardian" is to be found in Reilly's conversation with Celia: she says, "I don't in the least know what I am doing / Or why I am doing it. There is nothing else to do: / That is the only reason." Reilly replies: "It is the best reason." Or consider Reilly's remark to Edward about Lavinia: "The fact that you can't give a reason for wanting her / Is the best reason for believing that you want her." In each case, it is "the guardian" ("the obstinate, the tougher self; who does not speak, / Who never talks, who cannot argue") which has made the decision. Eliot may also intend an analogy: what the personal "guardian" is in the individual, the Christian "Guardian" is in the world.

Gibbs) and the frivolous gossip and busybody (Mrs. Shuttlethwaite). Against taking this convention too literally, and against the tendency of the others (Edward, Lavinia, Peter and Celia) to project a personality of their own making upon each other, comes this warning:

. . . we die to each other daily.
 What we know of other people
 Is only our memory of the moments
 During which we knew them. And they have changed
 since then.
 To pretend that they and we are the same
 Is a useful and convenient social convention
 Which must sometimes be broken. We must also remember
 That at every meeting we are meeting a stranger.

It is this which Edward and the others *and* the audience have to learn: to *see* one another as "strangers"; only then can they learn, of themselves, "the change that comes/ From seeing oneself through the eyes of other people." Celia learns it, painfully:

. . . I see another person,
 I see you as a person whom I never saw before.

The audience has to learn too, for it is involved in the general blindness, as much "in the dark" as Edward is. The penalty for not *seeing* is to miss the rest of the play, as well as the meaning of the play. We have to see that the real Julia, the real Alex, the real Reilly, are "strangers"—not what they may appear to be in the first act. When we know that Julia's denial that she knows Reilly is a sham, we should be in a position to understand that her role of busybody was also a sham, a role consciously assumed in order to test Edward, to watch over him and the others, to keep him firm in his decision once he has made it and, most important, to make him face the implications of his decision—both for himself and the others. She and Alex manage the exits and entrances of the others, maneuver Edward's meeting with Celia and Peter, and watch over the consequences of those meetings.² But they

²Consider, in this connection, the "mysterious" bottle of champagne. Julia opens a full bottle of Edward's champagne but says it is a "half-bottle." The point is not that she is being malicious or greedy or blind, but that she foresees the consequences of Edward's talk with Celia and obligingly leaves them an open half-bottle for their "farewell drink." But her action, in context, *appears* otherwise.

must sham since they are aware that, should Edward suspect he was being "guarded," should they show their hand, their whole plot would backfire and Edward's decision would probably be reversed. The seeming ambiguity of the "Guardians" is their own deliberate creation; they seem to change because we do not know of the shamming until it is over, and because they actually do change *in the eyes* of the others. In fact, the "Guardians" have a fixed purpose and consistent personalities throughout the play; they are not gods, or gods-and-devils, or the better halves of themselves or of anyone else. These suppositions have arisen because the play cannot be understood until its *text* has been comprehended and taken into the experience of the hearer or reader.

I mean by *text* something that is both textual and scriptural. The text of *The Cocktail Party* is as complex as it is Christian; in our time, its Christianity is one cause of its complexity. For the very fact that the play had a Christian subject would have made it hard for it to get a wide hearing, and it is for this reason that the thoroughly Christian aspect of the play exists almost *sub rosa*. This sounds at first like defeating your purpose (and there is something to this); but one of Eliot's greatest problems was, as I have said, just how he should make it possible for a perceptive (and receptive) hearer to penetrate from the secular "front" to the Christian "interior." What Eliot was counting upon was, I think, his conviction that "we have today a culture which is mainly negative, but which, so far as it is positive, is still Christian." It is this notion of a residual Christianity which Eliot is getting at in Julia's reference to St. Antony, or in the exchange between Julia and Edward about "good Samaritans." But at the same time that Eliot is giving a description of the society in which we live—a society which is Christian if only in its unthinking habits—he is also attempting, I believe, through the very same phrases, to recharge that Christian experience which is indicated by them, and to guide the audience which has forgotten their meaning to understand it anew in the context of the play. This should make clear the presence in the play of a large number of those gnomic sayings which still preserve a Christian savor in our speech: not only "playing the Good Samaritan," but "speak of the devil," "playing the devil's advocate," "the one-eyed man in the kingdom of the blind" and so on. Once these phrases, or their metaphorical or dramatic paraphrases, are explored for the

full range of their meaning, the play will assume its actual Christian aspect.

Consider the use of expressions involving "the devil" in the first part of the play. Celia says of Reilly: "Then he *must* be the Devil! He must have bewitched you." A champagne cork pops in the kitchen and Edward says, "What the devil's that?" The "devil" happens, in this case, to be Julia; compare Lavinia's "I'm puzzled by Julia. That woman is the devil." Later, Lavinia asks Reilly: "Are you a devil/ Or merely a lunatic practical joker?" When Edward replies to Reilly's method of putting his initial (devilish) advice that Edward should be thankful Lavinia has gone, he says: "Don't put it to me. . . . And please don't suggest./I have often used these terms in examining witnesses"; here I think Eliot is paraphrasing dramatically what we mean by "playing the devil's advocate." And there are other phrases and other proverbs which seem to have a tacit dramatic relevance: "the door is open to the devil," "speak of the devil," "the devil has all the best tunes," "gin is the devil's drink." Reilly and Julia and Alex appear "devils" to the others for obvious reasons: they show up when they're not wanted, and their advice seems to have diabolic consequences. What Edward and Celia and Lavinia do not suspect is that their description of Reilly and Julia as devils is really very much to the point; that is, although Reilly and Julia are actually not "devils," they are, however, "playing the devil" and Reilly is "playing the devil's advocate" for a fixed purpose. In order that their purpose should succeed, they wear, each of them, a devil's mask. I think the sense of that purpose and the meaning of the mask can be found in another proverb: *to play the devil for God's sake*. This is what Reilly and Julia are doing; Reilly, the masked actor, *tempts* Edward in the matter of Lavinia's return and the Christian meaning of Edward's reply is: *Get thee behind me, Satan!* Eliot (and Reilly), I think, would say that this reply of Edward's is possible only because we still have a culture which is to some extent Christian; but so much has gone out of our conscious Christianity that the reply has to be elicited in a negative way: the way of the devil which is also the way of the world. Edward does not know that he is being *tempted*, nor does he understand how Christian his reply is: his Christianity is quite unconscious but nonetheless operative. If we ask why it is necessary to play "the devil for God's sake," we

can see that had Reilly appeared flaunting a cross or quoting scripture or choice passages from *The Idea of a Christian Society*, Edward would have been openly hostile and would have perhaps made a different decision. In this Eliot means that Edward resembles his society: he is unconsciously Christian but his reaction is negative when he is evangelized. And, for just these reasons, *The Cocktail Party* itself, as a whole, wears—even in its title—the mask of the secular world in the service of a Christian society.

Beneath its mask, the play is both a description of Christian life and the dramatized creation of a possible Christian society.³ The “Guardians” are not saints or supernatural beings, but merely ordinary people who happen to hold the Christian belief. What has seemed divine in their conduct is the fact that they are living the Christian life, the life of Christ. Thus, metaphorically, Reilly brings the dead to life (Lavinia), or restores their sight to the blind (Celia, Edward, Lavinia, and, eventually, Peter); thus Celia, after she has renounced “the world, the flesh and the devil,” suffers the Passion in Kinkanja. And all are involved in the attempt of the individual to escape his blindness (self-love) through the communal (Christian) life. By the end of the play, “Guardianship” (even as unconscious Christians) has been taken up by Edward and Lavinia whose destiny it seems to be to “keep an eye” on Peter. Celia, it is true, becomes a “Guardian” in a more transcendent sense. But they are all Guardians, conscious or unconscious, of two things: each other and the Christian idea. And, if you happen to share Eliot’s convictions, it will follow that the guardians of the Christian idea are “the one-eyed in the kingdom of the blind”; nothing more exalted than that. According to the practicing Christian, I believe, men are blind, or have half-sight, or perfect vision, to the extent to which they happen to “see the light”; that light which informs the imagery of the whole play is to be found in John, VIII, 12: “I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness but shall have the light of life.”

Elsewhere Eliot has described in some detail the particular kind of Christian society which I think he is describing in the play:

³A year before *The Cocktail Party* appeared, R. P. Blackmur remarked in a shrewd illustration: “Eliot’s religious poetry is a partly utopian and partly direct aesthetic experience of the actual Christian life today. That is what it is about, and it cannot be judged aesthetically until full stock has been taken of what it is about.” HUDSON REVIEW, Summer 1948.

The Community of Christians is not an organization, but a body of indefinite outline; composed of both clergy and laity, of the more conscious, more spiritually and intellectually developed of both. It will be their identity of belief and aspiration, their background of a common system of education and a common culture, which will enable them to influence and be influenced by each other, and collectively to form the conscious mind and conscience of the nation. . . . (*The Idea of a Christian Society*, pp. 35 ff)

It is not only a projected society, but a society which, dramatically, is being made before our eyes. The Christian conspiracy begins at the Chamberlaynes' but as the play ends, Alex and Julia and Reilly are off "to the Gunnings." And so the society comes to include those who, like Edward, may not *consciously* hold Christian beliefs:

I cannot foresee any future society in which we could classify Christians and non-Christians simply by their pretensions of belief, or even, by any rigid code, by their behaviour. In the present ubiquity of ignorance, one cannot but suspect that many who call themselves Christians do not understand what the word means, and that some who repudiate Christianity vigorously are more Christian than many who maintain it. (*Ibid.*, p. 35)

If this is not enough to make the point, I think the sense of Eliot's Christian community can be got in the following extract from an early patristic epistle. The point of view of the writer is similar to Eliot's (though the direction is reversed); it is that of a Christian in a society which was not yet Christian (and which might never be):

Christians are not distinguished from the rest of men, either by land, or speech, or their customs, for they do not dwell somewhere in their own cities, or use a different language, or practise an extraordinary kind of life. . . . They dwell in their own countries, but as sojourners; they take part in all things as citizens, yet they suffer all things as strangers. Every foreign country is their fatherland, and every fatherland is foreign. . . . What the soul is in the body, that the Christians are in the world. (*Ep. ad Diognetum*, 5,6)

There is hardly a sentence of this extract which will not light up some part of *The Cocktail Party*.

For instance, it would be a mistake to suppose that, because Eliot's "Guardians" are conceived as Christians, they are thereby exempt from normal human failings or from the general corrup-

tion of modern life. The Julia of Act I ("Potato crisps? No, I can't endure them!") is no less frivolous than the Julia of Acts II and III ("You shouldn't interrupt my interruptions"). She is a frivolous and "gluttonous old lady"; she also happens to be a Christian. Nor should the fact that she and Reilly and Alex are, in Act I, Christians incognito, lead us to suppose that they are more intelligent than anyone else in the play. That Julia imagined she could get to a place in Essex, from London, on her way to Cornwall, was no part of her disguise or her "game"; it means merely that Julia, like the others, belongs to a fractured "society," a culture which has a sense neither of place nor history ("Colchester? Lavinia just loves oysters"). And this is the meaning of Lady Klootz, and Mary Mallington (with a monkey) on her way to Mentone ("I . . . go south in the winter") and Princess Bologolomsky and the others. No Christian is exempt from this corruption, or indeed from most human corruptions:

I have tried to restrict my ambition of a Christian society to a social minimum: to picture, not a society of saints, but of ordinary men, of men whose Christianity is communal before being individual . . . a community of men and women, not individually better than they are now, except for the capital difference of holding the Christian faith. . . . The Kingdom of Christ on earth will never be realised and . . . it is always being realised. (*The Idea of a Christian Society*, p. 59)

It is important, for the play, that we should try to understand the characters as being individuals as much as Christians. The fact that Reilly speaks a passage from Shelley has been commonly supposed to be a private aside of Mr. Eliot's; actually it seems to me to say far more about Reilly (and this should be all that concerns the reader): he is the kind of man who, upon occasion, quotes Shelleyan mysticism and, on another occasion, sings obscene songs. When a little tight, he is capable of joshingly "propositioning" Julia (that is what the song means, if you know the rest of it, and Julia does: "I've never been so insulted in my life"). Eliot is rounding Reilly off, trying to make him believable as a whole Christian man, just as Julia's foibles are intended to relieve what would otherwise be a dull and abstract pious old Christian woman. Alex is not only a traveler and a Christian; he is also a bore. These qualities are neither antithetical nor complementary; Reilly's Christianity is not meant to cancel his early obscenity:

The struggle to recover the sense of relation to nature and to God, the recognition that even the most primitive feelings should be part of our heritage, seems to me the explanation and justification of the life of D. H. Lawrence . . . we also need to know how to see the world as the Christian fathers saw it . . . unless we can find a pattern in which all problems of life can have their place, we are likely to go on complicating chaos. (*Ibid.*, pp. 62-3)

Whether or not Eliot has succeeded in this (I do not think he has) involves a judgment both of the play and of Eliot's Christianity. And, in this connection, it may be useful to remember that Eliot has recently stated his conviction that "we should turn away from the Theater of Ideas to the Theater of Character."

Before criticism, there is one final point. The charge has been brought that Alex' description of affairs in Kinkanja is largely irrelevant to the quite straightforward business of getting Celia martyred. This criticism is somewhat unfounded. A necessary part of the description of a Christian society is its relation, not only to the secular states with which it is involved, but to other and non-Christian societies. Kinkanja, with its mixed population of Christian natives and natives worshipping a monkey-god, is such a test-case, both for the colonial administration and for Eliot's Christian society. The problem is presented as one which is insoluble by ordinary political methods, since the problem is, in origin, religious and, only afterwards, economic and political. Into this troubled place come two representatives of an alien culture: Celia, the thorough Christian, and Alex (with the governor), the agent of a neutral and benevolent government. "British Council" methods, although laudable, produce merely delay and an "interim report"; but Celia is martyred and, after her death, is accepted by the natives and harmonized with their cult of the taboo "saffron monkey."⁴ A religious problem is shown to have a (pos-

⁴I confess myself unable to guess what Eliot intends by these "saffron monkeys" and their connection with the New York restaurant where Peter has lunch with Princess Bologolomsky. It may mean merely that New York is a pagan place; but why "saffron"? There seems to me to be a sacramental idea present, but I find this difficult since one doesn't necessarily eat saffron monkey when dining at "The Saffron Monkey." Perhaps Eliot is referring to the actual species of "saffron monkey"; if so, some anthropologist will be able to elucidate the point. Or the source may be some one of the *Mowgli* stories; or perhaps the "ape in saffron clothes" of Book XI of *The Golden Ass*; or Portia's little monkey; or merely an orange version of Hanuman, the Hindu monkey-god from the *Ramayana*. In the East, saffron is the color of the life of renunciation. But "God knows"; I don't. The point is obscure.

sible) religious solution. Eliot's intent is not, I think, dogmatic, but experimental:

. . . missionaries have sometimes been accused of propagating the customs . . . of the social groups to which they have belonged, rather than giving the natives the essentials of the Christian faith in such a way that they might harmonize their own culture with it. (*The Idea of a Christian Society*, p. 53)

Into this confused world (of mixed and conflicting religious cultures—India) came the British, with their assurance that their own culture was the best in the world . . . and their bland assumption that religion was a secondary matter. It is human, when we do not understand another human being . . . to exert an unconscious pressure on that person to turn him into something we *can* understand: many husbands and wives exert this pressure on each other. The effect on the person so influenced is liable to be the repression and distortion, rather than the improvement, of the personality. . . . The benefits of British rule will soon be lost, but the ill-effects of the disturbance of a native culture will remain. To offer another people your culture first, and your religion second, is a reversal of values: and while every European represents, for good or ill, the culture to which he belongs, only a small minority are worthy representatives of its religious faith. (*Notes Towards the Definition of Culture*, pp. 64-5)

From the reference to husbands and wives who "exert an unconscious pressure on each other," it will be seen that the play has traveled full circle: the problem in Kinkanja is no more, in fact, than the problem of Edward and Lavinia on an intercultural level. In either case, Eliot would say, the problem is basically religious, and will have to be solved, if at all, by religious means.

I have no notion that this analysis exhausts more than a part of the play. Its resources are as endless as the language in which it is composed and extend as far as the gnomic verse will take us into a Christian experience residual in common speech. We may or may not realize the implications of what we say when we say *Speak of the devil* or *God knows!*; but we still say them. The problem is not so much whether these bones live, as whether they can be made to live again. A play which recreates the experience to which the words properly apply is one way of finding out and of getting the answer you want. The fact that the phrases are current—though unconscious—currency is the enab-

bling condition of the dramatist's purpose. Look at the names of the *dramatis personae* once more: not only are they etymologically meaningful, but they are unconscious carriers of a certain kind of past. There are the *Christian* names, Celia, Henry, Edward, each bearing the mark of its patron saint; Lavinia, the bride of Roman history. And there are the names of place and the British experience: old English in Shuttlethwaite and Quilpe, Scotch in MacColgie Gibbs, Latin-Norman in Chamberlayne, and that strange mixture of aristocratic Norman and common Irish, Harcourt-Reilly. There is also that "Guardian" who has no name but lives in Dedham: Lavinia's Aunt. She is a Christian fiction, the kind of excuse we invent—in an unconsciously Christian society—when we want to disguise the truth; we may be disguising the truth but the disguise is Christian. When the irony is realized, she becomes the subject of a toast, binding the group together. Or, on another occasion, a toast to her may be part of the shamming of a man who, like Edward, lies like a Christian. Even a Christian society must have its little jokes.

III

In criticism of a play of this kind, I think we are involved in a larger number of judgments than is normal. Not only do we have to estimate the play which most people saw—the rather amusing and bewildering secular comedy with Christian overtones—but we also have to come to terms with the total play—the Christian play *and* its secular mask. Judging a Christian play means, I think, judging the Christianity of the play as well as the way that Christianity gets into the drama. If Eliot is dramatically creating a Christian society, you will have to criticize that society when you criticize the play, for the play happens to be inseparable from the society and the Christian experience it creates. Finally, you have to judge the way in which the exterior is related to the interior: how well has it been made possible for a perceptive reader to make his way from the outside in? I am not sure that all of these judgments are yet possible in our present ignorance of the play, but I should like to put forward several points.

There is something imprudent about asking whether the popularity of a popular play is deserved. Given Eliot's purpose—a profound play in popular disguise—it is perhaps enough that

the play was popular. But it seems to me a miscarriage of the artist's job if his reputation does his work for him, and I think Eliot's reputation is very much at the root of the play's popularity. I doubt that this was intentional: Eliot could not have foreseen that his audiences were as anxious to move about on his level as he was to operate on theirs. But this fact has made it difficult to estimate whether or not *The Cocktail Party* is viable as a popular play. On the whole, I doubt that it is. True, it is amusing, it is polished, well-constructed, even "different," and it has a readily accessible moral intent. But as a secular comedy it will not bear comparison to Coward or to Shaw, and it is difficult to see, on the interpretation of the popular reviews, that the play has been more than an interesting *tour de force*. Quite simply, it was not written in the dramatic mode demanded of a popular play, and that demand has to be met, more or less, if the purpose of the play is to succeed. It is, of course, a difficult thing to write one play which has two different surfaces, and still more difficult to connect those two surfaces. But I suspect Eliot's failure is due to his not having understood just *how much* of some things a popular play demands from the dramatist; this, I think, is a part of his judgment, as a Christian, upon the world of "a thousand lost golf balls." It impoverishes the play.

The poverty may, however, be intentional, may be intended to make the reader look more deeply for his satisfaction, and I think there is something to this, if you consider just how the two plays, Christian and secular, are connected. That connection has been made with great care and relies for its effectiveness on the willingness of the hearer or reader to answer, in terms of the text, the questions which the play was designed to raise in his mind. Almost every criticism of the play has been bewildered by the role of the "Guardians" or the mysterious champagne bottle or the impression of destiny-at-work, but it was intended by the dramatist that there should be bewilderment. This was not gratuitous: Eliot was counting upon the hearer's being puzzled *and* upon his readiness to look for the answers in the text so that, step by step, question by question, he should make his way from the exterior to the heart of the play: "Nobody likes to be left with a mystery: It's so . . . unfinished." There is not one of these mysteries which cannot be answered from the text, and Eliot cannot be held responsible for the failure of his stratagem. It seems, unfortunately,

that audiences—serious as well as popular—are unwilling to bring to the play as much detective intelligence as they would to a “whodunnit” thriller. Under such conditions, we shall have only the kind of drama we deserve.

Once, however, the reader has arrived at the interior of the play and can see that what is taking place is not a strange conspiracy by mysterious figures, but a Christian society in the making and a description of the conditions of Christian life, he should be able to take his stock of the play. There are a number of dramatic blemishes and several crucial flaws of structure and characterization. I think, for instance, that Eliot would have been wise to give the audience rather more assistance in discovering the nature of the “Guardians” and their conspiracy; almost everything hangs on Reilly’s bare statement that he was asked to the party by Julia, and this is insufficient for the theater. Again, it is difficult to believe that Eliot has properly handled the solution of the play, especially the part pertaining to Celia’s martyrdom; up through the second act, however, Eliot shows himself in firm control of the play. But no matter how relevantly or fully you explain the import of the tangled problem in Kinkanja, it is doubtful that the purpose of the tale comes within the scope of the dramatist in this particular play. It may help to justify Celia’s martyrdom if you happen to know that her death was relevant to the solution of a large problem, and that that problem resembles the central problem of the play, but I cannot think that this justification has emerged dramatically. It is leaving rather too much to a messenger to report not only a martyrdom but its import as well, even though the messenger is himself unconscious of its real import. Of course Celia’s death leaves its own mark upon the others, especially upon Peter, who realizes that his own self-interest is “not good enough for Celia.” But it seems to me very much a question—and a serious one—whether *The Cocktail Party* itself is “good enough” for Celia—or, for that matter, for the Chamberlaynes.

Take the Chamberlaynes first. In the play their lives represent the alternative to Celia’s way—an alternative which deserves, as Eliot seems to realize, considerable richness. These alternatives are not a Christian one and a secular one (for the Christian “Guardians” have chosen a life more like the Chamberlaynes’ than

Celia's) but the "sainted" life and its day-to-day complement—the life "without an eagle," as Trilling puts it. Of these two ways we are told: "Neither way is better./Both ways are necessary." It is, of course, idle to talk of better or worse when you are talking of necessities, and recognition of this fact should have closed the question. But, in fact, in the play it has not; Reilly may have stated the solution, but Eliot has not yet met the problem, or, if he has, his answer is not Reilly's. This seems to me apparent in the qualities which the dramatist thinks are demanded by the "sainted" life but not by "the common life"; the extraordinary poverty which he gives the Chamberlaynes' life as compared with the demanding richness of Celia's stresses the point. One can perhaps disallow Reilly's description of the common life as his own (shortsighted) observation, but Eliot's attitude is made clear in the dialogue between Edward and Lavinia before the final party starts. Here the solution of their problem seems to have led to nothing more than an exchange of solicitous (but eventually self-interested) compliments and a possible pregnancy which presumably stand for such happiness as their lives can hope for. This simply will not do, dramatically or emotionally; it is not what we mean by "making the best of a bad job," or even a good job, and the Chamberlaynes' capacity for suffering (Celia has no monopoly on this) leads one to expect that they are capable of such happiness as this world gives. My point is not that we should expect Eliot to say that there is no difference between these two lives (as a Christian he is bound to enhance the "sainted" life) but that his Christianity is no more than half the story it should be. He pretends, intellectually, to the *whole* Christian tradition but his emotional grasp is only of the extreme ascetic half of that tradition. It is for this reason that the play itself does not seem to me "good enough for Celia," or for the Chamberlaynes either.

Both the Chamberlaynes and Celia are good at suffering; but when it comes to their release, their happiness, the play dissolves. Dramatically, there may be reason for choosing a martyred saint, but not all saints are martyrs, and many, I believe, like Elizabeth of Hungary and Jane de Chantal, achieved their sainthood by living "the common life" as we know it. And it is difficult to see why the burdens of that life should not be as great, as demanding, as the martyrs' momentary anguish and renunciation. I think

Eliot realizes this but he does not yet know it, and it is this failure of his own Christianity that impoverishes the Christian society the play is trying to create. A part of that poverty gets into his characters: if you really look at Reilly, he seems rather ingrown; his wholeness—if that is what Eliot is attempting—still bears the mark of its willing, and is not natural. He is the kind of man who thinks he ought to sing obscene songs because he thinks we ought to “find a pattern in which all problems of life can have their place.” One admires the insight, but not the realization. This, of course, does not damn Reilly as a character, but if Eliot’s purpose was what I think it was, the creation of a Christian society and not merely a Puritan one, he has not quite carried it off. His characters, none of them, have the wholeness of the whole man, or of the whole Christian man, and it is for this reason that the play is thin and its society an impoverished one. The characters are imperfect as Christians and as individuals because they bear the marks of Mr. Eliot’s imperfect Christianity, not of his hostility to the secular world. But in view of the scarcity of the whole secular man and the imperfect secularism of most of us, it is difficult to damn Mr. Eliot’s Christianity for having the corruption of the times in it. *The Cocktail Party* seems to me by no means a “great” play, but at least a good one, and it is by far the best of Eliot’s plays. Those who believe that “every new literary generation has to begin by killing its father” had better examine both themselves and their intended victim: they may not be Mr. Eliot’s heirs, nor he the infirm father they thought. He may be a stranger.

IV

I have not intentionally shirked the problem of the verse. It seems to me that we have to see what the play is about before we can deal adequately with the play’s means. But sooner or later that problem will have to be met. For the time being, I should merely like to suggest that those who have dismissed the verse as unnecessarily austere, even ascetic, ought to examine its meters and meanings in the light of what Eliot has said of his own purpose:

. . . my ambition was, and is, to write a play in verse without the audience having to put itself in a special frame of mind to listen to poetry. I wanted to write a play in which the audience should be

affected, unconsciously, by the rhythm of the verse, without being consciously aware that it was verse they are hearing. I wanted the audience to be aware of the poetry only at intense moments; and I wanted them to feel at such moments, not that they were listening to lines of poetry by T. S. Eliot, but that the dramatic situation had reached such a point of intensity that it was *natural* for the characters to express themselves in poetry. . . . No poet has begun to master *dramatic* poetry until he can write lines of verse which are . . . *transparent*: that is to say, you listen not to the poetry as poetry but to the meaning of poetry.

I am not at all sure that I understand what Eliot is trying to do, but my own experience in the theater, hearing the play, leads me to believe that something was being done, effectively, something for the analysis of which the critical training of most of us is simply inadequate. A large part of this something was metrical, and this can be roughly confirmed by a comparison of the first and second halves of the first scene in Act I; but the eventual job needs to be thorough. Another part, the meaning, is carried in those gnomic phrases like "speak of the devil" which have a very precise connotation in their context and have the enormous advantage of being conversational currency. But in both cases, metrics and meaning, it should be apparent that the author's purpose has been to write poetry which is also valid as conversation; that *The Cocktail Party*, in its technical aspect, is the attempt of a poet to come to terms with the conditions of the popular prose theater in a way that is neither intransigent nor compromising. But the attempt is more than technical, for the play is also the effort of a Christian to write a Christian play in such a way that it can get a wide hearing and yet make its point to those who are sufficiently neutral and inquisitive to look into it. If you happen to be both a Christian and a poetic dramatist in an age which is not overtly Christian and which suspects poetry, you will eventually have to come to some such stratagem if you are to go on writing for anyone but yourself.

It is both the practical and the artistic craft of *The Cocktail Party* which makes it seem so significant to me, as significant for verse drama—and other genres—as *The Waste Land* was for poetry. The position of the Christian poet in England is actually no different from that of any serious artist in America: both find

themselves unable to say what they have to say directly because they think they will not be understood, and this produces the condition called "alienation." But a refusal to compromise with a corrupted culture need not entail artistic intransigence. And if we are going to rescue that culture we have from its corruption, it is up to the artist to get his values, his version of a culture, before as large a public as he can in a way that will not dilute what he has to say. This means the repossession of popular forms—like the slick comedy of marital misunderstanding; it also means a maximum of artistic craft and enough practical craft to know that there is almost no other way.

To Aphrodite

Translated from Sappho by JOHN B. EDWARDS

Throned in beauty, immortal Aphrodite,
Versed in weaving wiles, mighty Zeus's daughter,
Now I call on thee, do not crush my spirit

With woe and sorrow.

Come to me now if—if ever thou hast heard me
Call thee from afar and to my call didst listen
Then to bring me aid, yoked thy car and hastened

Swift to come hither,

Leaving thy father's golden house. Swiftly hither
Have thy fair fleet birds from high heaven brought thee,
Beating their great wings, onward through mid-ether

To this earth's shadows.

Thou didst smile on me, O thou dear, dear goddess,
Asked what wrong was mine that I must call to thee?
What now can it be in this heart driven frantic

Most now I long for?

*Who is it now I must persuade to take thee
To her heart again? Who is it, O Sappho,
Is to thee unkind? Even if she flees now,*

Soon shall she follow,

*And if she will not now accept thy presents
Sweetly, yet soon she'll give; if now she loves not,
Soon shall she love thee, even though her will be*

Still set against thee.

Come now thou also and free my heart from heavy
Cares and fulfill now all my heart is longing
For to have fulfilled, and thy self, O goddess,

Stand by to help me.

Three Provençal Poems

Translated by W. S. MERWIN

GUILLEM COMTE DE PEITAU: *Vers*

*Pos de chantar m'es pres talentz,
Farai un vers, don sui dolenz:
Mais non serai obedienz
En Peitau ni en Lemozi.*

*Qu'era m'en irai en eisil:
En gran paor, en gran peril,
En guerra laisserai mon fil,
E faran li mal siei vezi.*

*Lo departirs m'es aitan grieus
Del seignoratge de Peitieu!
En garda lais Folcon d'Angieus
Tota la terra e son cozi.*

*Si Folcos d'Angieus no·l socor
E·l reis de cui ieu tenc m'onor,
Faran li mal tut li plusor,
Felon Gascon et Angevi.*

*Si ben non es savis ni pros,
Cant ieu serai partiz de vos,
Vias l'auran tornat en jos,
Car lo veiran jov' e mesqui.*

*Merce quier a mon compaignon
S'anc li fi tort qu'il m'o perdon;
Et ieu prec en Jesu del tron
Et en romans et en lati.*

*De proeza e de joi fui,
Mais ara partem ambedui;
Et eu irai m'en a scellui
On tut peccador troban fi.*

GUILLEM COMTE DE PERTAU: Vers

That the fevered breath attain relief
I shape a song upon my grief
Who will to love no more hold fief
Here in Poitou or Limousin,

Who in terror turn and peril
A stranger, and commence my exile,
And where neighbors work his evil
In time of war forsake my son.

Ah lords and counties of Poitou,
In this forsaking is my sorrow!
I beseech Foucon d'Angou
To guard this country and his kin.

If not his hand avails us, nor
That king in whom I rest my honor,
How great the pack eyeing the plunder:
Gascon thieves and Angevin.

Lords, if valor and wit be small
These when I leave will seize the wall
And quickly shake it, and it fall
Where little I left it, young and thin.

May he nearest who follows me
If ever I wronged him pardon me;
To Jesus on his throne I pray
This in my own tongue and in Latin,

Who have been kin to strength and mirth
And know this parting from them both
Toward that demesne whose king and faith
Wall them with peace even who sin.

*Mout ai estat cuendes e gais
Mas nostre Seigner no·l vol mais;
Ar non püesc plus soffrir lo fais,
Tant soi aprochatz de la fi.*

*Tot ai guerpit cant amar sueill,
Cavalaria et orgueill;
E pos Dieu platz, tot o acueill,
E prec li que·m reteng' am si.*

*Toz mos amics prec a la mort
Que vengan tut e m'onren fort,
Qu'eu ai avut joi e deport
Loing e pres et e mon aizi.*

*Aissi guerpisc joi e deport
E vair e gris e sembeli.*

GIRAUT DE BORNELH: *Alba*

*Reis glorios, verais lums e clartatz,
Deus poderos, Senher, si a vos platz,
Al meu companh siatz fizels aiuda;
Qu'eu no lo vi, pos la nochs fo venguda,
Et ades sera l'alba!*

*Bel companho, si dormetz o velhatz,
No dormatz plus, suau vos ressidatz;
Qu'en orien vei l'estela creguda
C'amena·l jorn, qu'eu l'ai be conoguda,
Et ades sera l'alba!*

*Bel companho, en chantan vos apel;
No dormatz plus, qu'eu auch chantar l'auzel
Que vai queren lo jorn per lo boschatge
Et ai paor que·l gilos vos assatge
Et ades sera l'alba!*

I have been gay but this my laughter
The lord forgets from his desire;
I can no burden longer bear,
So near I come to the last pain.

From all I love I turn aside,
I leave my knighthood and my pride;
May all reach welcome under God
And pray him that he take me in.

May those my friends after I die
Form in honor about my body
Who have been guest to mirth and joy
Far and near and in my mansion,

And thus depart mirth and joy,
The colored robes and sable skin.

GIRAUT DE BORNELH: Alba

Glorious Lord, fountain of clarity,
God of all power, if it please Thee,
Be by my friend unslumbering vigil
Whom I no longer see, for the night fell,
Until arrives the dawn.

Friend, whether dreaming or half-roused you stay,
Slumber no longer, but renew the eye
Where in the east I see the light rise
That salutes day, and the star recognize
That trembles upon dawn.

Friend, I smooth the entreaty into song:
Slumber no more, for I hear the bird sing
That goes inquiring day among the trees,
And tremble lest one jealously surprise
You as now the dawn.

*Bel companho, issetz al fenestrel
E regardatz las estelas del cel!
Conoisseretz si·us sui fizels messatge;
Si non o faitz, vostres n'er lo damnatge
Et ades sera l'alba!*

*Bel companho, pos me parti de vos,
Eu no·m dormi ni·m moc de genolhos,
Ans preiei Deu, lo filh Santa Maria,
Que·us me rendes per leial companhia
Et ades sera l'alba!*

*Bel companho, la foras als peiros
Me preiavatz qu'eu no fos dormilhos,
Enans velbes tota noch tro al dia.
Era no·us platz mos chans ni ma paria
Et ades sera l'alba!*

RAIMBAUT DE VAQUEIRAS: *Planh*

*Altas undas que venez suz la mar,
Que fai lo vent çay e lay demenar,
De mun amic say mes novas comtar,
Qui lay passet? no lo vei retornar!
Et oy, Deu d'amor!
Ad hora·m dona joi et ad hora dolor!*

*Oy, aura dulza, qui venez dever lai
Un mun amic dorm e sejourne e jai,
Del dolz aleyñ un beure m'aportai!
La bocha obre, per gran desir que n'ai.
Et oy, deu d'amor.
Ad hora·m dona joi et ad hora dolor!*

*Mal amar fai yassal d'estran país,
Car en plor tornan e sos joc e sos ris.
Ja nun cudey mun amic me tenys
Qu'eu li doney ço que d'amor me quis.
Et oy, deu d'amor!
Ad hora·m dona joi et ad hora dolor!*

Friend, but approach and by the window stay
And see the stars diminish from the sky;
Judge if the word is amiable I send you
That you neglect, and yours will be the sorrow
 When the time fades to dawn.

Friend, friend, since you departed me,
I have not slept nor straightened from the knee
Petitioning the holy Virgin's son
That he to me render my companion,
 And soon arrives the dawn.

Friend, on these garden and indifferent stones
I prayed that no sleep touch my orisons
Till all dark vanishing rewarded day,
But comes no answer when I sing or pray,
 And early comes the dawn.

RAIMBAUT DE VAQUEIRAS: Planh

High waves that shift and gather from the sea
With any wind or fancy, from my lady
What do you, syllable or sighing, carry,
Or casual song, who comes not back to me?
 And ah, Deus d'Amor,
Grant in its hour joy as grief in its hour.

Such sweetness folds him who returns from where
My lady holds her sojourn and glad slumber
As seems reprieve and liquid offered where
These lips wait parted, agèd with desire;
 And ah, Deus d'Amor,
Grant in its hour joy as grief in its hour.

Poor is the love one sends from alien fires
When all his hopes must make content with tears.
Now from her dreams the shape of me retires
As promises forgetfulness requires.
 Ah, Deus d'Amor,
Grant in its hour joy as grief in its hour.

CHRONICLES

Counsel For The Defense

JOSEPH KERMAN

THE MAIN STREAM OF MUSIC and other essays, by *Donald Francis Tovey*.
Oxford. \$4.00.

THE CRITICAL WRITING of Sir Donald Tovey, which he himself always affected to dismiss as nonprofessional and occasional, was solidly grounded in his experience as a composer, professor of music, pianist, and orchestral conductor. Circumstances seem to support his modest appraisal, but a reading of his sixteen books does not; they provide a body of musical criticism which is unusually full, unusually consistent, and unusually readable and persuasive too. They consist largely to be sure, of analytical articles occasioned by the demands of his professions, close to a musical text: seven volumes of extraordinary program notes, and three "Companions" to standard didactic classics of which he prepared exemplary editions—the *Well-tempered Clavier*, the *Art of Fugue*, and the Beethoven piano sonatas. But his work is no more absolved on this account from the responsibility of a comprehensive examination of the art, both in its positive formulations and in its by no means ingenuous omissions, than Mozart is absolved from universality by the fact that practically all his music was written to commission. I prefer to think that Tovey's taste determined his classroom and concert repertory, and thence the directions of his criticism, rather than the other way around, and I certainly do not regret the emphasis on the specific in his work. In more general articles, such as are gathered in this last posthumous volume of his writings, and elsewhere,¹ he took the opportunity to fill such lacunae as he wished. This book, then, acts as a valuable and extensive supplement, and contains some of his most original and important essays, together with others in which his limitations are startlingly displayed.

The obvious and proper basis for Tovey's approach to music—let it be said—was that the only relevant view of art is aesthetic. However academic, it was at least undeflected by historical, social, psychoanalytical, or mathematical values. For Tovey musical beauty existed in its own terms, and "absolute

¹*Musical Articles from the Encyclopaedia Britannica*. Oxford. \$4.00.

music" was the center of all musical experience; his primary criterion for the value of music with words or with a program (though evidently not his sole criterion) was the extent to which the aesthetic qualities of absolute music could be imputed to it. Such an approach is less remarkable than the single-mindedness with which Tovey held it; of all the critics who have professed it, he is the one who embraced the responsibility it implies in establishing a method of work. Since musical beauty is purely musical, the first job is to investigate actual aesthetic qualities of actual musical procedures; and this investigation proceeds in every one of his essays, with a taste and perception that are really beyond praise. The results may be basic and unproblematical, but the process takes a subtlety of mind, a power of analysis, and a clarity of purpose, which nobody but Tovey has been prepared to bring to it. Prior to his example, musical analysis took not the least trouble with aesthetics, and the higher criticism badly missed a basic hinge to musical procedures.

In the best sense then, Tovey's criticism is technical; but he was at all kinds of pains to show that it was not on that account esoteric. The aesthetic qualities that he isolated do not exist on paper or in the minds of theoreticians, but only in the aural experience of a "naïve listener" unschooled in elements of music and unspoiled by musical history and theory. The only sophistication this listener is allowed, beyond that inherent in his existence in modern Western civilization, comes in listening to music; but there are no limits to his enthusiasm, idealism, intelligence, musical aptitude, and unholy confidence (encouraged by Tovey at every step) in his own primary, naïve reactions. It is to this listener that Tovey always writes:

The line between the technical and the aesthetic is by no means easy to draw, and is often, even by musicians themselves, drawn far too high, so as to exclude as merely technicalities many things which are of purely aesthetic importance. . . . The process miscalled by Horace the concealment of art is the sublimation of technique into aesthetic results.

Indeed this line is by no means easy to draw, and Tovey's greatest achievement comes in drawing it so cleanly a hundred times, and in drawing it so low. The naïve listener maintains the aesthetic importance of double counterpoint, stretto, binary form, modulations simple and extreme, and even the presentation of the fugue subject backwards in the "Hammerklavier" Sonata. Tovey's feeling was especially keen for those very essential qualities that depend on relationships in time: rates of movement, tensions, suspense, different shades of recollections and securities, in the last analysis the coherence of large and complex forms. His insights, as I have said, are basic, and he never tried to make them seem complex; I suppose they may even seem trite to elegant minds. Like Gluck, Tovey is hard to illustrate by short examples, but things of this kind have struck me in the present book:

Nothing is more astonishing in all Schubert's development than his achieving, quietly and simply, at the age of seventeen, exactly the right modulation at the beginning of *Gretchen am Spinnrade*. The four and a half bars in C may, till the last moment, turn out to be a dominant of F, but the harmony swings back inexorably and dryly to D minor.

Of Beethoven's C sharp minor Quartet:

It begins with a fugue . . . there is something unusually formal in the eight bars of clearly cadential tonic-and-dominant at the return to C sharp minor (marked by a double bar and four sharps in the score, bars 83-90); and the preceding ethereal passage in A for the two violins, answered by D for the viola and violoncello, is also considerably more like a distinct event than one would expect in a mere fugue. In short, this fugue has subtle signs that it is part of a work in sonata style, though the hard dramatic facts of that style are not allowed to disturb its quiet flow.

And more generally, as a gloss to this:

The aesthetics of sonata fugues are no more scholastic than the aesthetics of a play within a play, such as the Murder of Gonzago in *Hamlet*.

Of course this means nothing unless you have heard the song and the quartet, and unless you have followed Tovey's exposition. But if you have, the facts are self-evident and extraordinarily simple—once they have been pointed out. No tolerable criticism can exist without a groundwork in such deceptive simplicities.

II

Devotion to the aesthetics of absolute music led Tovey to another very fundamental principle: that the chief perfection of music lies in its power to organize itself into large and complex coherent forms. While this belief did not entirely determine his interpretation of the musical tradition, it supported the central structure of music in the "sonata style" by Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven, and fixed his interest more and more upon it. If one were to make a full catalogue of Tovey's views, it would appear that this main edifice, suitably extended on either side, is founded and buttressed by church music; that medieval music is excluded as archaic, and baroque music as immature, with the important and isolated exceptions of Bach and Handel; that opera is incorporated very uneasily; and that "interesting historical figures," with certain patriotic reservations, are best ignored. In other words, while Tovey rejected practically everything that he was taught about musical theory and musical form, his first instinct was to accept and make his own the standard Victorian view of the musical tradition, down to its last characteristic detail. This alienates those for whom any musical orthodoxy, or say a certain fiducial measure of it, is synonymous with Virgil Thomson's "Appreciation Racket,"

the cant of the writers of program notes; they are unfortunately in no position to learn from his mature apology for the old-fashioned position, nor his genuine revival of those aspects of it to which he gave his chief labor. The rest of us will agree—without reversing the syllogism—that “All’s not false that’s taught in public school,” and look to Tovey for dignity perhaps unsuspected in a rather hastily tarnished conservatism. In “Stimulus and the Classics of Music,” his inaugural address as Reid Professor in Edinburgh, Tovey spoke against both

the indolent reverence that admits nothing in common between our minds and the minds of the great masters; and the irreverence that would reduce the mind of a great master, or, for that matter, any other mind, to the exact level of our own.

Even in 1914 the second evil seemed more immediately dangerous, and lively attacks against it were to crop up in all of Tovey’s writings. But any half-careless reading shows that his announced role as “counsel for the defense” presupposed elaborate criticism of the music that he defended.

The word “conserve” contains critical dimension, and in the whole of musical criticism this appears most strikingly from Tovey’s work with the sonata style, the center of his musical system. Certainly from our catalogue we would see nothing new; he never found it necessary to question the dogma that Mozart and Beethoven wrote fine symphonies and quartets. But he found at once that the conventional devotion to it was superficial and indolent, and that reverence would have to rest on a fresh understanding. For Tovey, the essential fact about the sonata style, which sets it apart from the idioms of Bach and Palestrina, is that the music moves in a dramatic way, dramatic in a very special sense germane to pure music, not to be confused with the histrionic elements of opera. Dramatic movement is generated by rhythmic irregularity, by the pregnant construction and apposition of phrases, by the spacing and grading of climaxes, and by the subtle balance of material in exposition, development, and recapitulation. The direction and the real sense of this motion is determined by the flux of tonality; the aesthetics of tonality, remember, are the property of the naïve listener, not only of the trained musician, who may indeed be too busy with the harmonic associations of single notes to apprehend tonalities at all. The most futile part of standard doctrine is the concept of stereotyped forms into which composers are supposed to pour their ideas as into molds. True form cannot exist *a priori*, but grows from the necessities of the material; conventional abstractions of sonata form, rondo, and so on, tell us no more than that “the form of a cathedral is cruciform.” And form depends more on a system of fundamental directions, that is tonalities, than on the more arbitrary distribution and reappearances of musical themes.

The best gauge of the power, I would even say the necessity, of this interpretation is the illumination it yields in Tovey’s analyses. It enabled him, for example, to beat the Mozart bandwagon as early as 1903 with a penetrating

study of the classical concerto—but this is not to say that stagnant theories of musical form have yet been replaced. Even some musicologists, up to the present time, are offering Tovey's ideas with an air of novelty; whereas his impatience with historical scholarship was tempered with praise, and never stopped him from profiting from its research, the scholars have not been equally practical. He liked especially to roar at them for bringing to publication voluminous serial sets of "immature music" while the great symphonies of Haydn remained largely unavailable for performance and study. Quite right; and one would have expected someone who was so wonderfully appreciative of Haydn to have brought these symphonies out of the libraries himself, or at least had his students do it. Admiration for Haydn was only one outcome of the revision of a whole group of standard notions about the classical composers. Here is a short list, with references to *The Main Stream of Music*: 1. Haydn's style was naïve and primitive ("The Chamber Music of Haydn," a long essay which ranks with Tovey's "Companions" for completeness); 2. Mozart's use of form tended to the mechanical; 3. Beethoven effected a revolutionary break from the formalism of Haydn and Mozart ("Some Aspects of Beethoven's Art Forms," and see also of course Tovey's *Beethoven*); 4. His late work, though mysteriously sublime, is formless and finally free of the shackles, etc. (*ibid.*); 5. Schubert could not compose in the larger forms ("Franz Schubert," a magnificent job, and "Tonality in Schubert"). Tovey often repeated his theory of classical tonality, but never carried it further than in this latter article.

On the one side of his beloved Viennese classics, Tovey's perception of the style was sharpened beautifully by his grasp of the nondramatic, rhetorical, architectural art of Bach and Handel. According to his view, these composers achieved a type of large-scale purely musical construction which was perfect, though archaic in terms of the sonata style; his interest naturally centered on Bach's instrumental repertory. As Bach's vocal music adopts the characteristics of absolute music more severely than that of any other great composer, Tovey's analyses here are also very revealing. But on the other side, the championship of Brahms will seem to most readers now to be Tovey's most serious positive aberration. Again, we can turn to him for the most adult presentation of the arguments, by no means negligible, in favor of Brahms' greatness; but the distance of his view from our own appears from the fact that the attacks which he parries so carefully in "The Chamber Music of Brahms" seem altogether beside the point today. The matter is certainly not to be brushed aside in a paragraph; all I shall say is that current opinion is more likely to apply to Brahms something like Tovey's judgments of Bruckner or Max Reger—form is organic, and Brahms' basic language and his basic impulse are not dramatic enough (in Tovey's term) to sustain the outwardly plausible constructions which embody them. The higher his aim, the duller

his failure, and we see Brahms only too clearly as the first and the greatest of that terrible species of our age, the artist "out of joint with his times." Tovey himself was such a composer. One can see a few distressing bars in the Encyclopaedia Britannica article on Rhythm; I am afraid that the schematic abstraction, there offered by way of demonstration as the ground-plan for the final version, seems infinitely preferable to the harmonized and rhythmicized complete setting. It is against this sort of anachronism, if ever at all, that one is tempted to invoke Tovey's dictatorial common sense.

Outside the central area of the tradition as he saw it, Tovey relied more and more on bright but dogmatic conventionality. His discussions become not less brilliant, but less frequent, less liberal, less dense and argumentative and complex. There are gaps in his analyses of Bach and Handel; while he commends the baroque aria as a purely musical form of maturity and great flexibility, he tells us no more about its inner workings than abstractions of the order of "the form of a cathedral is cruciform." It is clear that he had unusually wide knowledge and understanding of the church music of the Golden Age, less clear why a Mass by Palestrina represents a coherent large form any more than say a sonata by Corelli, or why aesthetic criteria, as opposed to pedagogic, should have us slight the magnificent secular music of the sixteenth century. The concept of drama in the sonata style, fruitful as it is, obscured in Tovey's mind other dramatic criteria for musical works for the stage; obsession with tonality caused him to overlook music built on other foundations. Theoretically, Tovey considered Wagner's operas to be the climax of the sonata style, through their application of its principles on a more extended time-scale than had been imaginable before. But one hunts far among his books for much enlightenment on this seemingly central matter. Such a list, no doubt, could be made very large. Of course Tovey would have pointed out that these subjects were peripheral to his main interests; only one out of seven volumes of *Essays in Musical Analysis* treats Vocal Music, mostly oratorio, and so far as I know he never once did an essay about any opera except his own, though he has much about *Fidelio* in one place or another. But since he could not keep qualifying his pronouncements, and since he never chose to modify their tone of dead assurance, this reservation is easily lost even to those who are not disposed to read him as an oracle.

One trouble is that we automatically think of Tovey as a contemporary, if a conservative older contemporary, because his writing all dates from the twenties, his best-known books appeared after 1935, and his influence is still strong. But the rather astonishing fact is that every fragment of his opinion was hardened by 1905. Later years served to fill in rich detail and explication, to complicate the writing, and to test in performance views that never seemed to require serious revision; he was a brilliant young man, and by the age of thirty was writing the main articles on music for the Britannica, which differ

from his latest formulations only by a certain directness in exposition and relative humility in tone. He never grew past this point. It seems incidentally a strange case of inhibition, and it puts every single one of his attitudes in a quite revealing light. In 1900 Victorian dogma was not yet entirely disgraced; Tovey's mind was made up before the popularity of iconoclasm and the more sophisticated trends of modern criticism. At that time it was urgent to affirm one's faith in the power of absolute music, for the struggle between Wagner and Brahms was still paralyzing. "The Brahms line," as Thomson calls it, seemed a possible and honorable retreat for composers; as a younger contemporary of Brahms and a deep friend of Joseph Joachim, Tovey was drawn personally toward everything that Brahms stood for—an attraction intensified, if I read rightly, by commendable aversion to practices of Richard Wagner which were live memories then. Affection for the classics of oratorio and tacit disapproval of Italian opera are as Victorian in Tovey as his curious literary world of Lewis Carroll, Samuel Butler, Belloc, Macaulay, and John Milton. For that matter, so is his traditional amateur pose, which is no longer fashionable with younger British music critics.

And since Tovey effectively died as a critic in 1905, the music of our time simply could not exist for him. He was a big enough man not to bait; he just let it alone; he was slightly intrigued by Strauss, Sibelius, and Vaughan Williams and other Englishmen, but hardly at all by Debussy, Schoenberg, Stravinsky, Bartók, or Hindemith. The end of his Britannica article on Music is as blank as its beginning; the unhappiest four pages he ever wrote concern "The 'Lean Athletic Style' of Hindemith"; and the less said the better about his essay on Dohnányi. Tovey understood matters very well: "what I believe to be fundamentally wrong is every attitude towards the classics which does not make them a stimulus instead of an oppression." There are varieties of stimulus, but one may well ask what stimulus his view of the classics gave him toward the appreciation of the music of his own time. It is as though he could not tolerate any hypothesis, even tangentially, other than that of the sonata style, unless it happened to precede it historically; as though he were unable or reluctant to come to grips with any music that was not presented to him first of all, however imperfectly, as part of the accepted tradition. Exactly this conclusion is most to be feared from a preoccupation with the classics, and has done the most to discredit it. Tovey would have been the first to dismiss historical defense. Placing him in the generation of Daniel Gregory Mason may give perspective on his writings, but affords only the most fragmentary explanation, and no excuse at all, for his desertion before contemporary art. More relevantly, theirs is also the generation of Arnold Schoenberg.

III

Tovey is the most vigorous figure, even now, in English musical criticism, and he has had an inevitable and just effect on many writers in England and in this country too. I am sure we are none the worse for it, though the bolder fallacies of idolatry are obviously deadly, and some others have been developed which are more superficial, but perhaps even more exasperating. For instance, it seems fatally easy to translate Tovey's assurance into arrogance, though he himself was broad and generous as well as sure, and self-effacing in his devotion to great music. He sometimes snapped at undergraduates, and others, but his bark was worse than his bite; behind his attacks was a certain Victorian chivalry, and behind his self-confidence an intelligence which saw too clearly the fallibility of personal theories to give his criticism the tone that distinguishes some disciples, who have much less that is positive to offer. No good has come from imitations of the involved armchair conversation that constitutes Tovey's literary style; but there is no more to be lost by admitting now that I rather enjoy it, for my partiality is plain. I think his books are fun to browse in; after dwelling on the interminable *obiter dicta* for years I find them still amusing and suggestive; and for me the tremendous digressions carry enough bright side illumination to make worth while even the most disgraceful shilly-shallying, as in the article about Gluck. Tovey's favorite trick was to present objections to his argument—assuming that this was still discernible—and then to work around them with epigrams which became more dangerously brilliant in proportion to their failure to attend to the matter in hand. The impetus was more honest than the outcome, as Tovey well knew, but I am glad for the dimension this brings to the apparent simplicity of his direct judgments. One can anyhow make allowance for the originator of this elliptical and sometimes outrageous style, but not for those who lack his authority, his wit, and the concentration of his critical thought. It is embarrassing to read a younger critic who is unaware that Tovey's simplicity is the economy of an exceedingly clever man.

On a more serious level, I believe that the value that we can draw out of his work and experience is far greater than the combined dangers of indolent reverence toward it. In the end, this value will be measured by our willingness to see that the fondness of his attitude toward Brahms, and the fatuity of his approach to contemporary music, are solecisms to set beside equally great accomplishments. We may well adopt Tovey's contempt for *a priori* theories: his critical method need no more lead to this dead end than it need produce the rich insight which emerges surprisingly (some will say) from so conservative a position. I would suppose that the greatest lesson he offers is in his fundamental approach, the insistent concentration on the aesthetic value of

musical procedures; if aesthetic considerations are to go further, it can be only on this technical basis. A cunning man could not have devised a more winning creature for the people who are likely to read about music than Tovey's precocious naïve listener; he can remain the first witness of musical effects, even though we inform him of artistic postulates which he has not so far perceived. It is as necessary as ever for critics to disclaim theoretical constructions and nonaesthetic criteria for musical value; to write about music, not around it. And it will never hurt esoteric modern attitudes to stand the test of Tovey's common sense and "normality," his suspicion of the high-flown, and his obstinate central view.

The present inclination to seek modern affirmations from the musical tradition can take from Tovey the strongest encouragement and the sharpest warnings. Naturally, we see the warnings first; music today is not always posited on the hypotheses of his "main stream"; it may be to the more remote inlets that critical attention and sympathy can now turn for contemporary stimulus.

Having traced the main stream of music to what we may regard as the ocean . . . I can go no further. At the present time (1938) all musicians feel more or less at sea, and not all of us are good sailors.

Tovey can let a metaphor flow away with him—but ocean navigation is a plain necessity for our delicate sailors, even if it takes new-fangled instruments as well as all the old seamanship. Nevertheless, to the extent that our resistance to all orthodox tenets has become as involuntary, and as belligerent, as Tovey's devotion to them, we can find new use for their responsible defense. We shall never go to him for the music of the last hundred years, but our consciousness of the whole art is increased by every major insight, such as his superb exegesis of the Viennese classics. Though this repertory has its detractors, for the great majority of listeners, still, it seems to grow more and more central as we comprehend it better, by whatever means we can. More central, but not more exclusive; and Tovey's work bears something of the same relation, I think, to a comprehensive critical position for today.

Brazilian Modernism

RICHARD M. MORSE

TRENDS WHICH ARE thrusting Brazil into the political and economic realms of our thinking have not yet given a context for her artists and writers. These remain like exotic puppets along the periphery of our ken, naïve and decorative. Perhaps we are incurious about Brazil because we assume her to be passing a stage which we experienced fifty or a hundred years ago and consequently expect few new insights from an examination of her culture. The special quality of Brazilian values, however, lies in the fact that Brazil never was nor will be at any "stage" passed through by an "advanced" nation. Unless, indeed, we limit our use of "progress" and "stage" to mensurables like literary rates or miles of macadam highway, the terms are meaningless. Brazil, for example, was never at the stage, as was Europe, of bearing and suckling the automobile, the stream of consciousness, and cubism. These elements arrived in Brazil full-blown, and from abroad.

It is only within the past seven or eight years that Brazilian writers at large have become aware of Eliot. There are valiant attempts by poet and critic to assimilate him. A recent poem in *Revista Brasileira de Poesia* bears, untranslated, the title "My Necktie Rich and Modest." But for two reasons Eliot's impact on Brazil is different from what it was for us. First, the criteria and psychology of Brazil in the 1940's and now in 1950 are not those of America in the 1920's. Second, Eliot comes to Brazil not as an unwonted personal phenomenon, but as a respectable institution amply attended with explanatory critical literature.

This brings us to the contrast between the American or European, whose technics have borne him steadily and completely away from the simpler patterns of life, and the Brazilian, who, still keyed in many ways to the simplest of patterns, is forced to absorb and reconcile elements from the most complex. Brazilian solutions must be unique, and will afford us, along with special traits and traditions of the nation, fresh comprehension of the primitive, the modern, and their fusion. For instance, the use and meaning of the primitive in Portinari or di Cavalcanti is far different from that in Matisse or Henry Moore. Freudianism in Mário de Andrade's *Amar, Verbo Intransitivo* has implications not even to be found in D. H. Lawrence.

"Modernism," by which Brazilian artists mean their new self- and world-consciousness, blossomed overnight in São Paulo—as a specific fact, that is. As an uneasiness, a soul-searching, it had begun incubating when the law

academy and the old patriarchy ceased to produce scions who could cope with the times. It was the young men in their twenties who in 1922 took over the Municipal Theater for Modern Art Week. Their ragout of the arts was Wagnerian in scope. Vila Lóbos and his music were there. So was the pianist Guiomar de Novais. Above her protests Chopin and even Debussy were dethroned. The powerful expressionist canvases of Anita Malfatti were displayed, as was the sculpture of Vitor Brecheret, who was fresh from the heavy-handed Mestrovic's atelier. The poets Menotti del Picchia and Mário de Andrade declaimed against the hoots of a *fin-de-siècle* audience. Of the old guard only one was pressed into service: Graça Aranha, whose *roman à thèse*, *Canaan*, had appeared two decades earlier, gave a vacuous discourse on Aesthetic Emotion in Modern Art, "illustrated" with piano selections and with poetry readings by Guilherme de Almeida, who played truant from Parnassus for the occasion. There were African dances. Architecture, too, was represented, if but weakly. The cry was "futurism," though no one had more than sleazy notions of Italy and Marinetti.

But most important now, the gates were open to contemporary European arts, and to our own. Decreed the new magazine *Klaxon*:

Klaxon knows that the movies exist. Pearl White is preferable to Sara Bernhardt. Sarah is tragedy, sentimental and technical romanticism. Pearl is reason, instruction, sport, speed, joy, life. Sarah Bernhardt = 19th Century. Pearl White = 20th Century. The movies are the most representative artistic creation of our era.

From America, Gilberto Freyre, now Brazil's most renowned social historian, wrote indiscriminatingly of having discovered Mencken, Van Wyck Brooks, O'Neill, Sandburg, Lewis, and Charles Beard. But since the need for modernism was Brazilian, artists soon looked to Brazil for themes and forms.

The social turbulence that led to the "New State" muddled the stream of artistic modernism and made stagnant backwaters. There was *verdamearelismo* (green-and-yellowism, the national colors), practiced by the novelist and fascist leader Plínio Salgado and by the poet-historian Cassiano Ricardo. There was *antropofagismo*—a return to nativism in the extreme image of the pre-Conquest cannibal—with its high priest, the waggish though confused "mural novelist" Oswald de Andrade. The second was a less paralyzing formula and produced the trenchant short stories of Antônio de Alcântara Machado and the stark paintings of Tarsila do Amaral. The sort of concern that colored much literary output in the '20's and the new stripped prose style show up in the remarks of a "little magazine" anent a southern fishing trip made by Hoover:

Here comes Hoover and he's fishing. Not even the shark has fled before his bait. And the President smiles, ever more content with life. On land he keeps on fishing. Here comes Hoover. Here he comes, and he's fishing to find out where our anthropophagous traditions have led us.

Brazil, my love, have you too turned fish?

Most of the early modernists, however hotly nationalist, could not build personal solutions out of the modern Brazil that they saw. Ready-made aesthetic and social programs from sophisticated foreign lands were too handy. Looking back we can now distinguish those few whose work is of sounder, more enduring value. Vila Lôbos. The poet Manuel Bandeira. The painters Emiliano di Cavalcanti and Russian-born Lasar Segall. The critic and historian Sérgio Buarque de Holanda. And a few others: above all, the late Mário de Andrade.

Mário synthesized modernism, both its values and, in modest degree, some of its shortcomings. He, like the movement, was at grips with the enigma of Cocteau versus the *macumba*, of socialism versus colonialism. At times and for limited ends he went along with the cliques, but always knew that the way out had to be personal, deep-sprung, not formulistic. His quest called into play a diversity of talents that is perhaps no longer within the range of an American or Frenchman. Some of his many-sided verse is among the movement's finest. His short stories, his "rhapsody" *Macunaíma*, opened up new themes, a new Brazilian language for fiction. As a critic, nimble always with the idiom, techniques and standards germane to each case, he was able to excoriate the poetaster, the "nickel-plated bourgeois," or the mere virtuoso of harp or palette. He excoriated, but also pointed a way. Herein lay his value for the more creative generation that followed: Drummond de Andrade, Portinari, the composer Camargo Guarnieri (who unlike Vila Lôbos recreates native themes polyphonically), the northern novelists, the architects, the historians and social scientists.

Mário knew that the first step toward restored faith in Brazil was to make the country's traditions and essence known on a primary, widely comprehensible level. Only then would the artist have context. Mário was among the earliest to rediscover the talents of the crippled mulatto Aleijadinho (Antônio Francisco Lisboa, 1730-1814), whose exquisite religious sculpture in soapstone is spilled prodigally through the little towns of Brazil's heartland, Minas Gerais. He helped establish an aesthetics for the profuse folk arts of Portuguese, African, and Amerindian origin. While in public office he envisioned a program—tragically hobbled by the politicians—that would have brought a living culture to the groping masses of the city.

Mário's formal training was for music criticism, but to all his writings he brought such a measure of common sense and insight that in each realm he explored his contribution was positive, particularly since in Brazil *é tudo pra fazer*: all is yet to be done.

Mário de Andrade was perhaps not *the* leader of modernism. But more nearly than anyone else he *was* modernism, with his iconoclasm and concealed nostalgia, his lyricism and social consciousness. Modernist, too, with his indecision and, in these lines, his cocksureness:

*I am difficult as a writer—
But on whose shoulders lies the blame?*

.
*You recognize the French word "singe"
Yet don't know what "guariba" is?
Well, my friend, the word means "monkey,"
You who know only what's foreign.*

Most of the early modernists are still alive and active. Some, mentioned above, have held true. Some have comfortable niches in the bureaucracy. The dispersive critic-poet-painter-sociologist Sérgio Milliet is the respected and too-lenient arbiter of all that's new in all the arts. The amiable, once-keen Alceu Amoroso Lima (Tristão de Athayde), become a staunch Thomist, presides with slight malaise over a coterie of dead-earnest, fire-eyed twenty-year-olds. Alone now, the petulant Oswald de Andrade thumps, with verve still but with ever more hollowness, his anthropophagous drum.

Of the second-generation modernists, one of the most commanding figures is Carlos Drummond de Andrade. The verses below reveal his strain, though their interest lies not so much in their inherent merit as in the fact that they have been hailed as a manifesto:

*And what now, José?
The party is over,
the lights are put out,
the people have vanished,
the night has grown chill,
And what now, José?
And what now, Joaquim?
And what now—you?
You without name
who jest at the others,
you who make verses,
who love, who protest?
And what now, José?*

.
*Alone in the dark
like a beast of the forest,
bereft of theogony,
without a bare wall
against which to lean,
without a black horse
to flee at a gallop,
you keep on, José!
Where, José, where?*

Undismayed at not encompassing the eventual pattern of things, the acutely self-aware Josés and Joaquims (*Joaquim*, a current "little magazine," is published in "homage to all the Joaquims of Brazil") of the '30's set doggedly to work at fundamentals. Activity in folk arts and social sciences burgeoned. The ably directed Service of the National Historic and Artistic Patrimony was founded to study, restore, and wake appreciation for neglected treasures: churches, fountains, rural manors, domestic and plastic arts, paintings, even whole towns. The term *pesquisas*, or research, came to be applied to erudite as well as popular art. Earlier the most rewarding achievements had been in poetry and painting. Now, significantly, the novelists and architects were rising to the fore. Regional novelists of the cacao country, cane fields, jungle, southern gaucho land, and the beleaguered petit bourgeoisie of the cities—novelists intensely Brazilian in theme, if a bit amorphous in spirit and technique. (A few, not always the worthiest, are translated: Jorge Amado, Erico Veríssimo, Graciliano Ramos.)

The architects, of whom Oscar Niemeyer has widest repute, have at their best assimilated local needs and materials, the colonial tradition, and le Corbusier. They have been successful, perilously so. At the hands of less imaginative disciples their flexible methods threaten to ossify into soulless academicism. Even in America one hears prattle about a "Brazilian style" that denies the very adaptiveness which first gave it being. Regional planning has not kept pace with architecture (except for the city plan of Salvador, Bahia, which foretokens great things). This has been advanced to explain the communist penchant of many architects, disgusted with the unenlightened politicians and private interests whose regime restricts imaginative architecture to fits and patches.

The past decade has been, in Brazil as elsewhere, one of consolidation, reappraisal of the previous twenty years, and intensification of *pesquisas*. "Blague" is no longer countenanced. The critics, especially the youngest, are raising their métier beyond impressionism. They are tightening up, closing ranks. Poets are seeking a discipline: spiritual, social, emotional, or sometimes a technical one that smacks of Parnassianism.

The long-static theater is stirring. Shaw, Anouilh, García Lorca are produced. A fine modern theater center is planned for Salvador. A São Paulo repertory group takes Portuguese and Brazilian classics to towns of the interior. In Florianópolis another group plans to play Goethe for nearby German settlements.

Movies from abroad find the intellectuals far more exacting than did Pearl White a quarter of a century ago.

I have stressed the national, Brazilian expression that the arts are seeking. This is because the questions one hears from one end of Brazil to the other are not: What are the functions of the modern artist? the modern critic? but:

What are those of the modern Brazilian artist? the modern Brazilian critic? This nationalism is restrictive as long as it hangs on polemics over the *artista disponível*, the artist in service of a social mission. But it emancipates when it sets him for the first time within the regional colors and rhythms of Brazil.

São Paulo and Rio are no longer the sole redoubts of modernism. In the smaller cities, even in towns, of the coast and interior "little magazines" are budding. Typical is the one that takes its legend from Unamuno: "Let's commit a barbarity." The contents are often similar: a brief article on Sartre or Kafka; one on the continuing significance of Mário de Andrade; one on the task of the new generation, the *novíssimos*; a sketch by Portinari or Cícero Dias; verse by the new poets; a patronizing word from an older, established modernist. But what matters is that the arts are percolating closer to the people, are becoming a necessity. Every advance beyond the metropolis promises impetus and fresh solutions for modernism as a whole.

The menace inherent in any grass-roots movement is, of course, provincialism. An important literary event of recent years was the publication (1947) by Barreto Filho of a penetrating critical study of Brazil's outstanding nineteenth-century novelist, Machado de Assis. It was a reminder for the modern artist that to be of lasting value his work must transcend, in showing fealty to, the particular conditions of Brazilian life.

REVIEWS

A Discovery

YVOR WINTERS

THE CRICKET, by *Frederick Goddard Tuckerman*. Cummington Press. \$1.50.

THE PAST TWENTY YEARS of editing and criticism have made one thing (at any rate) clear to myself, in spite of the normal confusion of the period. The history of American literature, especially with reference to the nineteenth century, will have to be drastically revised. The discovery of Edward Taylor, of the colonial period; the gradual emergence of Emily Dickinson and Herman Melville (neither of them too well understood even yet by most of their admirers); Witter Bynner's recovery of F. G. Tuckerman from obscurity (a recovery as yet but scantily appreciated); my own recovery of Jones Very; and such major figures as J. L. Motley, as the Henry Adams of the *History*, as the Bryant of *Thanatopsis*, who are even yet awaiting some approximation of just evaluation—these writers, and the facts which I have indicated, cast a somewhat different light upon our literary history than that which we saw or thought we saw a generation ago. Longfellow, Lowell, and most of Holmes, to say nothing of others comparable, are now regarded as negligible, or so I suppose. Whitman and Poe will shortly disappear into the twilight of queer historical phenomena and bad influences; and Emerson will disappear into it to emerge only fragmentarily, or perhaps as the most shining example of a hopeless cause. What is emerging now is a group of writers who were obscured in their day (and in most of ours) because of a provincial audience, but who themselves were not provincial, or, if provincial, only superficially so, writers all of whom were profound and most of whom were (at least part of the time) finished masters of their respective arts.

But I am concerned at present with Tuckerman.

Frederick Goddard Tuckerman was born in 1821 and died in 1873. His wife died in childbirth in 1857, and her death is the explicit source of much of the melancholy in the poems written after this date. However, some of the earlier poems are equally melancholy, and the source of the melancholy in many poems, both before and after her death, is obscure: Tuckerman seems in some measure to have cultivated the prevailing Romantic mood, and even to have let it gain a kind of neurotic domination over him. He appears frequently

to be a decadent poet, almost as Verlaine is a decadent poet (though frequently, if one is to be fair to him, with little if any less of distinction in perception and execution).

Tuckerman's poems were first published in 1860 and were reissued in 1864 and 1869. There was an English edition in 1863. He must have had a fair number of readers to justify these editions, and he was not without his distinguished admirers, Tennyson having been one of them. In 1909 Walter Pritchard Eaton published an article on Tuckerman in *The Forum*. This seems to have come to the attention of Witter Bynner, who in 1931 issued through Alfred A. Knopf a selection entitled *The Sonnets of Frederick Goddard Tuckerman* (unless I am mistaken, this volume is still in print). Bynner had access to the published work and to the notebooks. A short time before these remarks were written, the Cummington Press issued *The Cricket*, a single ode, previously unpublished from the notebooks. *The Cricket* is the occasion of my present comments. My knowledge of Tuckerman is confined to *The Cricket*, to a few unpublished poems which I have seen by the courtesy of the Cummington Press, and to the *Sonnets*. The gentlemen of the Cummington Press inform me that Jones Very was at one time Tuckerman's tutor. For the rest, my biographical and bibliographical information are derived from Bynner.

The sonnets are in the main, though not entirely, elegiac and descriptive. The two most beautiful, I believe, are numbers XVI and XVII of Part II (Bynner's edition). The first of these describes a deserted house which had once been inhabited by the two beautiful sisters who haunt so many of the sonnets. It concludes:

*The house stands vacant in its green recess,
Absent of beauty as a broken heart.
The wild rain enters; and the sunset wind
Sighs in the chambers of their loveliness
Or shakes the pane—and in the silent noons
The glass falls from the window, part by part,
And ringeth faintly in the grassy stones.*

The second of these sonnets contrasts the civilized scene of the present with the savage scene of a few years before:

*Here but a lifetime back—where falls tonight
Behind the curtained pane a sheltered light
On buds of rose or vase of violet
Aloft upon the marble mantel set—
Here in the forest heart hung blackening
The wolf-bait on the bush beside the spring.*

And there are occasionally lines of "pure poetry," faint and derivative, I sup-

pose, but curiously haunting, like this from XX of the same group (the line refers to the two dead sisters, Gertrude and Gulielma):

They have their tears, nor turn to us their eyes.

Such passages, like the sonnets from which they come, have great beauty, marred occasionally by facile phrasing. The melancholy in these sonnets is comprehensibly motivated; in others it is less so, in spite of the fact that brilliant details, for the most part descriptive, may emerge. The poetry is decadent, sophisticated with respect to the qualities which it actually possesses, sensuously rich, and too often somewhat careless; on the whole, however, it is so lovely as to deserve a high place in our poetic literature of the nineteenth century.

The Cricket is an irregular ode, containing five sections of various lengths. The meter is iambic, and the lines are predominantly pentameter, but there is much variation in the length of the lines, and the rhyming is irregular. The rhetorical formulae are those of the Romantic ode, especially of the Keatsian ode. The formulae themselves are beautifully managed, but it is in the substance and in the details of perception that the poem surpasses its models.

The poem moves into its subject slowly and quietly. The first section, a matter of eleven lines, is a kind of invocation to the cricket as the subject of the poem, but superficially is devoted to the setting in which the cricket is found. It is gentle and bucolic, but perfectly executed. The second section continues and enlarges upon the theme of the first: the poet here appears in a superficial aspect as the descendant of Milton's shepherd and Gray's youth; if one wished to speak of him unkindly, one might say that he languishes amid the landscape. But the languishing and the landscape equally are handled very well in themselves, and both become gradually more important in relation to the central theme; they are not merely sentimental decorations. As the section proceeds, we are made aware not only of the scene and of the cricket, but of the infinite multitude of crickets within the scene—"acres of cricks"—and their sound is compared to that of the sea, the traditional symbol of nature (the impersonal source and conclusion of life), the symbol of that aspect of the universe which is distinct from human personality and intelligence.

In the third section, the cricket reappears in his familiar aspect, "dear to the child," and so on, but presently becomes the night-lover, "bringer of all things dark" (a notion not too remote from the affections of the child), and the sea-image is picked up and developed; and following the sea-image, the cricket is related explicitly, as he had not been before, with death, in some of the greatest lines in the poem:

*Thou bringest, too, dim accents from the grave
To him who walketh when the day is dim,
Dreaming of those who dream no more of him—
With edged remembrances of joy and pain:*

*And beyday looks and laughter come again;
 Forms that in happy sunshine lie and leap,
 With faces where but now a gap must be—
 Renunciations, and partitions deep,
 And final tears, and crowning vacancy!
 And to thy poet in the twilight's hush
 No chirping touch of lips and tittering blush,
 But wringing arms, hearts wild with love and woe,
 Closed eyes, and kisses that would not let go.¹*

The fourth section is a relatively gentle and conventional one. The cricket, like Keats's nightingale, is placed in antiquity; but whereas the antiquity of the nightingale is largely a decorative and sentimental adjunct to the poem, the antiquity of the cricket has begun to seem and later quite obviously becomes an aspect of his prehuman and subhuman nature, of his symbolic embodiment of the archaic and of death; so that this section is not merely Romantic decoration, but contributes definitely and beautifully, though slowly, to the growth of the theme.

In the fifth section, which is the final one, and the longest, the aspects of the theme which have been broached are stated fully and are brought together. The section opens with an explicit admission of the evil, which, along with the fascination and beauty, is inherent in the theme. The poet compares himself, in his desire to understand the cricket more fully, to an enchanter who employed poison for the purpose of understanding the speech of the beasts:

*So that articulate voices now he hears
 In cry of beast or bird or insect's hum—
 Might I but find thy knowledge in thy song!
 That twittering tongue
 Ancient as light, returning like the years.*

Yet this knowledge, he is fully aware, is not the mystical knowledge assumed by Emerson and his disciples; it is the knowledge of death, or of the increasingly close approach to death:

*So might I be
 Unwise to sing, thy true interpreter
 Thro denser stillness and in sounder dark
 Than ere thy notes have pierced to harrow me.*

But the fascination of this approach, even as he sees its evil and terror, remains with him; this fascination is carried over in part from the third section, in which he laments a death which has occurred earlier, presumably that of his

¹In a later version of the poem, discovered since the publication of *The Cricket*, the unfortunate phrase "and tittering blush" appears "with laugh and blush."

wife, although she is not explicitly identified in this poem, as she is in some of the sonnets. And in this vision of the desirability of extinction, he rises to a vision of the impersonal universe lying in sunlight as magnificent as any of the similar passages in *Le Cimetière Marin*, and in this passage he recalls by suggestion his comparison of the sound of crickets to the sound of the sea:

*For larger would be less indeed, and like
The ceaseless simmer in the summer grass
To him who toileth in the windy field,
Or where the sunbeams strike
Naught in innumerable numerousness.
So might I much possess,
So much must yield.*

Gently, almost casually, but in magnificent language, he leaves his topic as impracticable (for he must live now and die eventually); and he returns to a kind of melancholy common sense:

*Then cricket sing thy song, or answer mine:
Thine whispers blame, but mine has naught but praises.
It matters not.—Behold, the autumn goes,
The Shadow grows,
The moments take hold of eternity;
Even while we stop to wrangle or repine
Our lives are gone
Like thinnest mist,
Like yon escaping color in the tree:—
Rejoice! Rejoice! whilst yet the hours exist;
Rejoice or mourn, and let the world swing on
Unmoved by Cricket song of thee or me.*

The poem may seem on a careless reading to be loosely organized, to be merely a series of notations on death and on landscape, but such an impression, if one receives it, is unjustified. To establish the cricket as a symbol, and temporarily almost as a deity, of nature and of death is no simple feat. Had the attempt been made more simply and directly, it would certainly have failed; to succeed, the poet was forced to place the cricket in its natural setting, to examine the setting in as many as possible of its implications, and to involve slowly and carefully in this his own relationship with death. It is a poem in which are related little by little the poet and his personal longing for death, his realization of the terror of death, his love for the natural landscape, his realization of the natural landscape as an impersonal thing and hence a symbol of death, his love of the cricket as a small but charming creature, and his realization of the cricket as a timeless part of the non-human landscape and hence as a symbol of the whole theme. It is a complex affair, but it is

all of a piece, and the subject is fully and beautifully explored. The cricket, who is introduced with affection and left with melancholy regret, is made in the course of the poem a symbol of the darkness of nature and of its severance from the human, of "renunciations and partitions deep," and he becomes, like Melville's whale, ubiquitous in time and in place.

American poets since the 1840's have been obsessed with the significance of death conceived as union with nature. Emerson speaks of such a union as good, though he cannot define it; he preaches his doctrine with something close to a Calvinistic intensity, and thus gives it a quality of religious feeling which it never achieved in England or in Europe. It is this religious fervor among the American pantheists which in turn makes possible so serious an investigation and rejection of the doctrine as Tuckerman's poem, or, on a smaller scale, as Emily Dickinson's *Farther in summer than the birds*. In so far as Tuckerman is concerned with speculation upon the pantheistic mystical theme, he is representative of this American tradition, or rather obsession. But the poem is greater than that: it is one of the great meditations on death to be written since the seventeenth century, along with *Le Cimetière Marin*, *Sunday Morning*, and *Thanatopsis*. It is probably the greatest single American poem of the nineteenth century; and the British poems of the same period which can be compared with it are few indeed.

Scientia Bene Modulandi

R. P. BLACKMUR

ST. AUGUSTINE'S DE MUSICA. A Synopsis, by W. F. Jackson Knight.
London: The Orthological Institute. 12/6.

THE IMPORTANT WORD in the heading above is Synopsis, and I could wish it appeared as a regular thing, not only to cover versions of the classics, but also to govern the published form of original work. A synopsis of this order is a concentrated, but not crabbed, almost neutral essay on the original: it does not exhaust the original but it gives one the chance to choose whether or not it is among the necessarily limited number of works one wishes to exhaust. Not all possible work can be done, but there is always work yet to be done; and to determine which is which, at a given time and for a given mind, is always valuable. I would suppose that for most minds at any time, Augustine's *De Musica* has no advantages. Mr. Knight's synopsis makes clear that for some minds—those concerned with the history of the ways in which relations have been kept up between the arts and society and individuals, and also those minds concerned with prosody and especially metre—*De Musica* has great interest.

These remarks are the preliminary report of a mind so interested. Mr. Knight's synopsis affords a vital nexus between St. Augustine's interests and my own,

all the more vital because (what a translation cannot do) it adverts again and again to the author's Latin. There is a life *between* the Latin and Mr. Knight's English. (E.g., speaking of the soul, the synopsis reads: "Above it is only God; below it, only the body. Without God, it cannot be whole; without its slave [the body], it cannot be superior, *excellere*. God exists more fully, *est magis*, than it does; the body exists less fully, *est minus*, than it does." And so on throughout the work; in this duplicity appears the life under the terms.) The synopsis brings the Latin nearer, and the thought to hand. It appears that we have a common subject, apart from but represented by our different languages.

Here is the subject, as expressed at the end of Book I. "Our definition [of music] 'knowing how to make controlled variations of sound correctly,' *scientia bene modulandi*, comprehends all movements whose variations are under correct control, *omnes motus qui bene modulati sunt*, but especially those movements which are an end in themselves, and exist for their own beauty or for the pleasure which they cause, not for some end external to themselves. . . . Music, making her way forth from some most intimate core of being, *procedens quodam modo de secretissimis penetralibus musica*, has left her footprints, *uestigia*, both on our senses and on the objects of our sensation. We should follow these footprints to arrive at that intimate core. . . ."

The fourth century, toward the end of which Augustine wrote his treatise, was not an age of poetry, or at any rate not an age of what to us seems great poetry; and it does not seem to have been to Augustine either, for his citations are from Virgil and Horace and Catullus chiefly, who were for him about as old as Chaucer for us. What survived, apart from the old poetry itself, was the procedure of poetry, its theoretic form, which had the name and seemed to have the habits of numbers. The quality of greatness showed in the quantitative aspect of numbers progressing through words, or sounds, by analogy and proportion, from one, through two, into three, with a kind of squad drill arranged by fours, all in sequences and similitudes of long and short syllables, and with a license of long and short silences. It was the study of this numerical aspect of verse which gave correct control of variations of sound; and it was the numbers themselves (as we should say the rhythms) which were the vestiges, indeed the manifestations, of the reality in the intimate core of being from which poetry or music drew its power. To Augustine numbers were the structure of being and it was through numbers, whether as rhythm or as mathematics, that intuition could reach the nature of being.

The temptation to depend on numbers is old. I do not know that Augustine is any worse off in his combination of Pythagoreanism and New-platonism than the devotees of the twelve-toned scale or those who propagate faith through the analysis of polls; and I rather think he was better off, especially in his addiction to the number three (though his friendliness toward fours, or squares, seems excessive). There is a deep convenience in triads, a real venture in tri-

angulation, and a perfection to the triangle itself, which taken as the routine of procedure seems actually to lead to process. Number as an expression of pattern, though it is always available, seems always in the instance a fresh discovery, and never, after the event, seems an accident. Indeed, it is only matters of number that seem absolute law, an absolute coverage of ignorance. Better still, for Augustine, the patterns of number, in poetry and music, served as reminders of the skills of thought which have nothing to do with the language of words. For him the meanings of words were arbitrary, and by human authority, while the meanings of things, such as those which numbers moved, were true. The music or the meaning, to paraphrase Eliot, is what goes on after the words have stopped; to Augustine the numbers made the form of the meaning according to laws which, with licenses of silence and elision allowed for, were absolute, were of interest in verse because of universal application, and were themselves a kind of limit to human knowledge. This is his way of claiming poetry as a form of knowledge, a form of being, or a form of revelation; claims to which we are sufficiently used in our own time.

It is sometimes refreshing to get your moralizing on a numerical basis; it does not beg the underlying question, it takes it for granted; and indeed when you read of numbers in Augustine you have the feeling of the vast pressure all about you of all that is known by faith and in certainty, though obscurely. The very excesses of the theory of numbers are witness to that pressure. You have the sense in Book II, for example, which deals with syllables and metrical feet, that if only you can keep your verse in good order, your soul and the soul of your poetry will be in good health—though of course it may take some professional stake in poetry to understand this phase of health, and how it is another, and the contrary, way of putting the kind of health which it is our contemporary pleasure to believe that we gain from the contact with the reality in words. The one supports the other; the reservoir of contradiction is in between.

Here is to me a charming example, which is Mr. Knight's synopsis of Migne iv.5. Augustine is of course concerned with quantitative, rather than accentual, or merely syllabic verse, and among his premises is that a long syllable is just twice as long as a short syllable and that the unit of duration is that of a short syllable, so that a Pyrrhic foot, composed of two short syllables, has two equal units or "times." This is what he says about the basic limitations of metrical feet arising from this theory of duration. "There are four feet which can consist of two syllables, and these are the only possible ones. The feet vary from two times to four times. The series, therefore, extends to four different feet and to four times in the longest foot, a result determined by the general theory of numerical series, earlier evolved. Syllables are distinct elements of movement, and all syllables have duration. Apparently, therefore, it should be

possible for feet to consist of as many as four syllables, for that is what reason demands; its requirement is entirely precise and inescapable."

Augustine was writing from an experience limited to Latin practice; he wrote authoritatively, and he found his authority in reason. When we read him we have in mind, besides our vague notions of Latin quantitative verse, principally our own accentual-syllabic tradition which has only recently lost its authority, and partly our sense of the French syllabic tradition, and perhaps the mixed tradition of the Italians and the Spaniards. Thus we see that Augustine's interest in duration had something to do with the quantitative aspect of verse, and that his interest in number had to do with accentual verse. We can immediately deduce that had his verse been like ours accentual-syllabic in its tradition he would have set up not four feet but three feet possible to use; the Pyrrhic would have been impossible; and further he would have argued from reason that metrical feet could not consist of more than three syllables. But what is interesting is that all these observations lead to the conclusion, that in any form of verse there is always *another* metrical control (another authoritative reason) at work than the one overtly practiced. Even the (apparently) simple purely syllabic verse, without accent and without quantity, is involved in the effects of both, although in no way necessary at any conscious level of practice. I do not know which would be the better argument in support of this notion, the ideograms of Ezra Pound or Augustine's theory of numerical series. It depends on how much of the burden of the soul's load is assigned to your choice, and not, I think, on any ultimately verifiable expansion of theory itself.

What I am saying is that the study of prosody is as good as any study to remind us, at the crisis of its failure, of the active pressure in all the works of the mind of skills, both of perception and expression, and of the operations between them which we call creation or discovery, which have never been articulated in any of the abstractable languages of the mind. When we see a man use another handle than the one we use, we realize, with a smart and a tremor, how much that we have not taken hold of has all along taken hold of us.

The peculiar advantage of realizing this in terms of Augustine's theory of prosody is that his theory represents a very real consciousness, in the backward parts of our own tradition, of a *rhetorical* command, or let us say a rhetorical wooing power, over words, which we have forgotten, but which yet corresponds in some sense to what we believe to be our new command over matter. I refer of course to the supremacy of mathematics as the ordering power, and sometimes the substance itself, of final relations. We too have mathematics as the reason of reason, divorced from but governing the actions of daily life when it is not degraded by them. It is interesting to see that Augustine's supreme mathematics, theology, led him to a similar conclusion. There is a Judicial

Rhythm or *numeri iudicales* which is the final test and estimate of the five subordinate forms of rhythm or number. This is a notion that Dante might have come on, though I do not know that he did so. Might not Augustine's Judicial Rhythm be an equivalent, another version, for what Dante meant (in the letter to Can Grande) by the *transumptive* power of poetry? The difference in terms would represent the difference in the point of view of the poet and the teacher; but both were concerned with where the "true joy" of poetry is. At any rate, though Augustine might have rejected Dante's term, Dante would have accepted Augustine's, knowing that they were in agreement and that the terms did not matter.

Both men would have agreed that poetry or music, as judged in rhythm or numbers, is a kind of mode of action in the soul, which if not divine is yet divinely inspired. To Dante, Love breathed the modes of poetry; to Augustine there was an intuition through rhythm or numbers of God, so that numbers were themselves the mode of action for the soul, not alone in the words which are the phase of that action in poetry, but in the other phases of knowledge as well. Arsis and thesis are but the blow and gift of knowledge: they give it, whatever its phase (and the body, says Augustine, has a beauty of its own), equality, similitude, and order. It is the rhythm that tells us what the knowledge is; or, in Augustine's words in this synopsis: "In all that we perceive and in all that we make, we gradually get used to what at first we rejected. It is by order that we weave our pleasure into one. We only like what has a beginning harmoniously woven on to the middle part, and a middle part harmoniously woven on to the end." It is *gradually*, grade by grade, rank by rank, number by number, that we come to understand a rhythm, and what the rhythm does to the words of a poem or the sounds of music, or indeed anything that we perceive. And as poets we must learn the procedure of number in order to come on the process which number imposes. There is, under or before everything, "vital movement, agile with temporal intervals, and it modifies what it finds, serving the Lord of All Things."

I have been patching together the language of the synopsis with predilections of my own; I hope with a sense for others as there is for myself, that the patchwork constitutes a reminder of those deep skills of imagination by which we get into words what, when it is there, makes them memorable, and what, when it is gone, makes them empty. Here is a patchwork entirely extracted from the last pages of the synopsis. "God has arranged that even a sinful and sorrowful soul can be moved by rhythm and can rightly perform it, even down to the lowest corruption of the flesh. So degraded, rhythm becomes less and less beautiful, but it must always have some beauty. God is jealous of no beauty due to the soul's damnation, regression, or persistence, *permansione*. Number, the base of rhythm, begins from unity. It has beauty by equality and by similitude, and it has interconnection by order. . . . All is due to the supreme eternal presidency of numerical rhythm, similitude, equality, and order. If this presi-

dency of mathematical structure is taken from earth, nothing remains. Clearly God in the beginning made earth out of nothing at all." It would seem from these patchworks, drawn from this synopsis, that Augustine thought poetry itself an increment to creation, at least under the right presidency.

I would not suppose that we could adopt Augustine's theory of number; but it should serve as a corrective to any theory of vestiges which we ourselves put up to make our way backward into the core of being.

Three Poets

FREDERICK MORGAN

XAIPE, by *E. E. Cummings*. Oxford. \$2.50.

GUIDE TO THE RUINS, by *Howard Nemerov*. Random House. \$2.50

THE WHITE THRESHOLD, by *W. S. Graham*. Faber and Faber. 8s. 6d.

THE POETRY of E. E. Cummings has maintained over the years its extraordinary uniqueness and purity. The seventy-one poems in the new book are more of the same Cummings we are accustomed to, and the job of a review is one of defining an attitude toward the poetry as a whole. Here I think questions of the technical merit of individual poems, however interesting, are of secondary importance. I might point to poems in which a piling-up of sweet and sunny words becomes cloying; to others whose typographical arrangement goes beyond what is needed to guide the speed and intonation of one's reading, and becomes merely clever; and to many more in which the intended effect is achieved exactly by the placing of a word or phrase and the use of a particular rhythm. What is more important, what needs to be acknowledged, I think, is first that the poems are on the whole highly successful in what they set out to do; and second, that they do not set out to do very much. For Cummings' success in maintaining the consistency and purity of his verse has been achieved at an enormous sacrifice, a limitation of vision so drastic as inevitably to preclude all possibility of scope, complication or profundity. The poems are all expressions of a single underlying attitude, whose validity is open to serious question: it may be described as one of naïve joy and wonder at the poet's own immediate responses to anything, coupled with a resolute rejection of all that complicates or enriches life for man as a thinking animal ("the mechanical itmaking sickness of mind"). The extent to which one will be satisfied by Cummings' poetry, it seems to me, will in the long run depend upon how wholeheartedly one is willing to subscribe to this attitude.

I'll go along with it to the extent of being entertained and sometimes delighted by the verse, with its calculated spontaneity, freshness and wit; of admiring the technique of the poet, and particularly his ear; of being grate-

ful for highly individual work that is like no one else's—but always, I am afraid, with an awareness that the poems do not come to grips with much; that even the best of them tend to be interchangeable; that their simplicity is, from any point of view other than Cummings' own, oversimplification; that they point a finger not to real things which the poet loves or hates, but narcissistically back to his own interior; that the delight with which one reads does not survive the reading as an accretion to one's own sensibility.

Howard Nemerov's *Guide to the Ruins* is a second book of verse that contains some interesting and successful work; what I chiefly miss is a center of gravity or of force, the sense of a strong controlling sensibility. One is aware of the talent, aware too that it has not wholly been released or brought into play. Nemerov's handling of language and rhythm is restrained, often to the point of flatness. His best poems, although never of great intensity, are intelligent, precise and sometimes witty. The formality of *Carol* and *A Poem of Margery Kempe* has a certain frigidity, but a certain elegance as well. In *Still Life III* a scene is built up and brought to life by a clever imaginative stroke; *A Fable of the War* is a successfully dramatized parable of soldiers at a nameless railroad station. In a lighter vein, there is the pleasing wit and playfulness of *The Earthquake in the West*.

But the quality of the book is uneven. The restrained understatement subsides too often into triviality, the wit into a not altogether pleasant smartness. The longer meditative poems do not, for the most part, seem to be doing enough work: *Nicodemus* and *The Lives of Gulls and Children*, for example, two of the better poems, are unexceptionable in a way, but suffer from lack of force and intensity. In fact, too many of these poems have an air of relaxed complacency—as if they were consolidations of a position too easily won—that would seem to indicate the lack of any strong generative impulse. Nemerov is capable of sound, intelligent work; he may be capable of much more. Perhaps he should take more chances.

The White Threshold, a new book of verse by the Scottish poet, W. S. Graham, has recently been published in England by Faber and Faber. What one had seen of his work—the “Three Letters” in *THE HUDSON REVIEW*, Winter 1949, and a scattering of poems in other magazines—suggested that he was a writer of unusual interest; and the impression is confirmed by this collection. The poetry has, at its best, great strength and integrity. Its chief defect, and a serious one, is the frequent congestion and incoherence that result from an excessive piling-up of imagery, sometimes combined with syntactical vagueness; but it is never lazy, dull or trite. It is a poetry of contemplation, of a contemplation that is true to the complexities of experience. A principal theme is the discovery of the self, the “I” that carries all its past with it but

is new and fresh at each moment. Another is the making of the poem, which, as the poet composes it, is a new and present thing built out of the resources of the past. The two go hand in hand, for it is by making the poem that the poet discovers who he is in relation to his own past experience and that of the race. Here is the opening poem of the book ("Since All My Steps Taken"):

*Since all my steps taken
Are audience of my last
With hobnail on Ben Narnain
Or mind on the word's crest
I'll walk the kyleside shingle
With scarcely a bark back
To the step dying from my heel
Or the creak of the rucksack.
All journey, since the first
Step from my father and mother
Towards the word's crest
Or walking towards that other,
The new step arrives out
Of all my steps taken
And out of to-day's light.
Day long I've listened for,
Like the cry of a rare bird
Blown into life in the ear,
The speech to that dead horde
Since all my steps taken
Are audience of my last
With hobnail on Ben Narnain
Or mind on the word's crest.*

This is one of the most successful poems in the book, attaining full expression with simplicity and directness. In other poems the texture is greatly complicated without adequate integration to the structure. As a result, the rhetoric seems unwarranted, imposed from without, and the poem becomes, to some degree, incoherent. But even in the unsuccessful poems there are lines or passages of great power, unmistakable signs of a large talent. The opening lines of the long title poem may make the point:

*Let me all ways from the deep heart
Drowned under behind my brow so ever
Stormed with other wandering, speak
Up famous fathoms well over strongly
The pacing whitehaired kingdoms of the sea.

I walk towards you and you may not walk away.*

*Always the welcome-roaring threshold
 So ever bell worth my exile to
 Speaks up to greet me into the hailing
 Seabraes seabent with swimming crowds
 All cast all mighty water dead away.*

I rise up loving and you may not move away.

*Let me all ways from these seas
 Restore to never forswear my air
 Breathed in the lamblood-reddened deep.
 For heart and whale's in covenant,
 The caaing threshber in his splendid blood.*

Very end then of land. What vast is here? . . .

Here we find certain characteristic marks of Graham's verse: its complicated magnificence, not always remote from incoherence; the dislocations of syntax and the strong use of weak words (adverbs and prepositions); the strong, sustained and individual music; the compelling power of particular images. The "White Threshold" is the sea itself; and the sea, for Graham, is a master image: it is what drowns us, and saves us; that against which we define ourselves, and that into which we must plunge to find ourselves. It is possible, indeed, that at present the sea means too much to Graham, and that the incoherence I have mentioned is partly due to an overconcentration of meaning in this and a few other key images.

Be that as it may, it is time Graham received in this country more of the attention he deserves. He has the power and insight of a major poet, and needs only further to define and clarify his expression. Some American publisher should wake up to his importance and put out a volume of his poems over here.

What To Do With a Drunken Sailor'

SIDNEY MONAS

MR. CARY'S THEME is history; or rather, the life force pushing history—a drunken sailor improvising escape from Authority; a tree cracking the Roman pavement. The individual on the one hand, and government, tradition, rote, on the other; anarchy and authority, their conflicts and coherence. It is history clinging to the significant, the symbolic, individual, for whose prob-

¹Joyce Cary: *HERSELF SURPRISED* (Harper. \$3.00); *TO BE A PILGRIM* (Harper. \$3.00); *THE HORSE'S MOUTH* (Harper. \$3.00). *A FEARFUL JOY*, published in London by Michael Joseph, will be issued here by Harper's in October, 1950.

lems the moral expedients his time, place, and profession afford are inadequate, who cannot save himself by rote, and who is pushed accordingly by the life force to creation and improvisation; whose situation is significant because it is suffused with the creative imagination. In the Sara Monday-Tom Wilcher-Gulley Jimson trilogy this life force manifests itself in, respectively, a cook, a lawyer, an artist, whose lives (crossing frequently) span English history from 1890 to 1940. Although each of these novels is told in the first person, and the three narrators attempt with varying degrees of honesty (never complete) to appraise themselves, our real acquaintance with their common spirit of creation comes from our view of their situation, the order and disorder we see them bring into it.

Sara Monday, "a born cook," as her future mate (and checkmate) Gulley Jimson says of her, is a woman in the sense that Jimson is an artist. Sometimes she even means not to be a woman; she just can't help it. Her tradition—old-time religion, Charlotte Yonge, the South Country—reinforces her singleness of purpose almost by blocking it from her conscious eye. The judge who condemns Sara to jail for pilfering states the theme ironically when he says that she is amoral, "another unhappy example of that laxity and contempt for all religious principle and social obligation which threatens to undermine the whole fabric of our civilization." The statement is newspaper-shallow, but its misunderstanding is profound. From it, Sara's memory goes back to her first marriage with her employer Matt Monday, passes over her subsequent life and finally back to her position in prison and what she thinks she has learned. By that time one is vaguely aware that the statement has "reverse English" and bounces obliquely. Later in the trilogy it is stated more explicitly (by Wilcher and Jimson) that Sara is primitive morality in woman-skin. Her whole immense inward force moves her toward what she must do; give a man his manliness, provide creature comfort for him and herself, preserve essential hypocrisies—in short, make a home for herself. She is the Eve of all religions (Gulley tells her she goes to seven o'clock service only because she hates to get out of bed, " 'Like a woolly savage that cuts off his nose to please his idol' "); social obligation incarnate; and the mother of civilization. She cannot be honest in the legal sense when this minor honesty inhibits her purpose, but this is guile rather than dishonesty, and she remains in what Protestant Tom Wilcher calls a state of grace. Although she is at the core of social life, she does not, however, understand its crust—does not understand why a bank manager, though he squeezes her arm, will not go on cashing her false checks.

Sara's purpose moves through the book like a train, picking up passengers as it goes along. Monday. Hickson. Jimson. This latter a painter, a thorny weed of a man, middle-aged, with a purpose of his own. She tries to "settle" him. His gaiety in poverty excites her. "I don't know what, it was a feeling underneath like a big hiccup that wouldn't come up." He resists, by smashing her on the nose, "Toko on the Boko." He gets off the train, but it moves on.

Next passenger, Tom Wilcher. "Genus, Boorjwar; species, Blackcoatius Begoggledus Ferocissimouse, all eaten up with lawfulness and rage" as Gulley Jimson uncharitably puts it. Wilcher becomes absolutely dependent on her; visits her bed by a most amazingly polite arrangement ("Pleasant as it would be and convenient, since we do inhabit the same house. . . ."); "allows" his London house to burn down and escapes with Sara to a suburban cottage, where Sara "settles" him, where this anxiety-ridden, driven, distraught, sensitive little man begins to come into his own. His niece, however, discovers that Sara has been pilfering to support Jimson. Sara reflects that Wilcher does not like to interfere with the law. She is sent to jail. Sidetracked, but the engine good as ever.

There seems little enough of history in all this, and except in Sara herself, as her movements slow down, as she begins to stash money away for her "helpless" days, there is hardly a sense of time passing at all. But this is the soft under-belly of history. Sara's constant primal force is so powerful that she has little awareness of the shifting social forces pressing against it. Her "end" has been so strong, and she has paid so little attention to "means," that she is "herself surprised" by the outcome, when society, or rather the court of law, which is only an improvised expedient of society, confronts her with them. As surprised as Eve ejected from the garden.

Sara, though she is writing only for the "newspapers," which have their own interest in the story of her fall, reveals to the reader frequently what she conceals from herself. She moralizes constantly. But in the very process of being trite or maudlin she betrays "the big hiccup that wouldn't come up." Nevertheless, there is a monotony of tone and style that prevents the novel from completely succeeding. Sara's similes are all out of the kitchen ("glass like tapioca . . .," "sun . . . like the gold on a green tomato," "rhubarb color over the bones of the cheek," etc. etc.), apt in themselves, but all of a flavor. There is, also, an over-reliance on the whimsical and the grotesque.

The first person narrative serves Cary well enough in *Herself Surprised*, but in *To Be a Pilgrim* it does him in. This time Tom Wilcher is the narrator. He is on the verge of death. Time and reality have begun to break down for him; he hears voices, physically, of people who have been dead many years. He fails to distinguish between what he is thinking and what speaking. He has intuitions and hallucinations of equally startling clarity. He deludes and undeludes himself constantly, and the distinction as to which of these processes he is engaged in is often tenuous. He is an exhibitionist who has gone about with a pocket flashlight illuminating himself. He is also a lawyer and a theologian, with keen insight into both these subjects. And yet, although we learn a tremendous amount about Tom Wilcher and what he stands for in *To Be a Pilgrim*, he never again appears as he does in *Herself Surprised*, sketched briefly by Sara, with sympathy and imagination. In fact, he gets to be a bore.

The title is from a hymn by Bunyan. Wilcher represents the Protestant

tradition, Protestant drive with a taint of madness because it imposes such fearsome responsibility on the individual, with no provided outlet, "not even a confession box." Wilcher, in the custody of his niece Ann (a doctor) inhabits Tolbrook, his country estate, where he is visited by a nephew Robert. And this is where history comes in. Tolbrook is England in miniature. Wilcher, a youngest son who had been (as he himself reflects) the heart of the estate, now senile, on the edge of death, his own heart his "enemy," overburdened and untrustworthy, wanders among historical objects, shuttles between present and past, contrasts the behavior of his niece and nephew with that of their parents. His responsibilities harass him. He wants to protect Tolbrook and its storied richness from Robert's plan to make an American-style industrial farm out of it. At the same time, he wants to be free of material ties, to wander, carrying with him nothing but his soul, to have history so completely within himself that he can cut loose from Tolbrook and be a pilgrim. Ann and Robert represent the young generation, with trappings of America and Europe spangling their surface, but the weight of their own English tradition unconsciously giving them gravity.

Wilcher is ineffective. In order for the will to be effective, he says, it must be impelled by desire, but in him two basic desires, manifesting themselves in love of order, property, stability, law, tradition on the one hand, and wanderlust, theology, prayer, and passion on the other, never resolve themselves. Their conflict within him paralyzes his will. The conflict between love of property and the Protestant drive "to be a pilgrim," is seen as fundamental to English history. Wilcher approves in the end of Robert's installing a threshing machine in the Tolbrook salon, because in this way Tolbrook is brought back into the stream of history—by a peasant's disregard for comfortable niceties: it becomes a pilgrim. (Thus England, also, in embarking on the Second World War.) But there is no guarantee that after Wilcher's death Tolbrook will belong to Robert so that the venture may go on; Wilcher fails to sign his will, and Tolbrook may be recalled from pilgrimage by the bluestocking Blanche.

This schematic concept of English history depends entirely on its people—the various Wilchers—to give it flesh. They fail. Wilcher's narrative suspends our disbelief by too thin a thread.

Ann, the doctor-niece, who imports her psychology in boxes from Vienna, part intellect, part perpetual schoolgirl, is rendered, over the course of the novel, believable. But too slowly. By the time we feel we understand her, she ceases to interest us. Robert, her cousin, whom she marries, is never displayed as a living person at all. He is talked about: that he is cruel to what he loves, that he is stubborn, that he has a passion for gadgets and farming, that he takes a utilitarian view of women; and he actually does do some things to indicate these traits. But his motives, his inward workings, remain a mystery. The other members of the family are equally shadowy.

The novel really tries to get at too much within too little. In the attempt

to make the near-pettifogger Wilcher a sort of English Leopold Bloom, to connect him with everything, at least everything English, the character loses the force it originally had. The style, broken by the unmercifully repeated epigrams of Edward, Ann's father, and Tom's and-so-forths and etceteras, becomes interminably dull. The relations between generations are sometimes very well done indeed, but the total effect is one of clumsiness. Tom Wilcher's rather frightening vision of the world in transition, of customs and institutions dissolving in the historical retort, is marred by his impulse to quote Edward's bad epigram about the clay turning soft when Michelangelo doffed his coat.

Gulley Jimson, on the other hand, makes a remarkably good spokesman for *The Horse's Mouth*. The exuberance of his language gives Gulley's commuting between jail and creation a fabulous significance; Gulley's sensibility gives unity, makes a structured novel out of what might otherwise be a meaningless collection of eccentricities.

Gulley is not simply an artist, but the artist of Wilcher's period-in-the-crucible—the prophetic artist. Blake is his grand-daddy. At sixty-seven, the tumescence of the life force within him is irresistible. "Limits of my fingers which are swole up at the joints. No fingers, no swell, no swell, no art." He goes about catching his tigers in red weather; avoiding the gamekeeper—the state, custom, authority. His intent is to get on with his work at all costs (in the end, the cost is murder). Churchwardens cover walls he paints with four coats of whitewash, a woman cuts his masterpiece canvas into strips to plug a roof leak, the town council pulls down his last great wall; but he concentrates on avoiding rancor, and thinks on the painting to come. His wall paintings particularly require an ignorance the agents of authority cannot afford to possess, whether they are churchwardens, town councillors, or "art crickets"; for Gulley calls back to Eden; or to a new Fall—a Fall into Freedom; away from the established convenience of rote.

Gulley has rejected even the paraphernalia of the artist. (In *Herself Surprised* he has told Sara that he doesn't like the word, it is unEnglish; he is a painter, a limner.) Particularly of the romantic artist; he cannot afford to feel sorry for himself; he is aware that if authority and the state conspire to stifle art it is because artists gnaw like rats at foundations in the totalitarian cellar. He paints on walls that crumble; it is better that they should crumble than that he should not paint on them. The most startling and inspired device is used to objectify Gulley's feeling for his own position; the description of old Snow, the emasculated cat in Coker's bar.

The cat mewed at the door. Then suddenly it appeared on the counter, winding its way among the pots like a white serpent. Three of the girls stroked it in turn but it didn't even look. It's coming to me, I thought. And it stopped and looked at me. Made a point. With one paw in the air. . . . Deaf, castrated cat. What did she care? She never knew

what was missing. The only individual cat in the world. . . . As I slipped out, something like a fiery comet whizzed past my left ear and I saw old Snow land in the light in front of me; all four feet at once. And then, with one spring, in every joyful lovely muscle, ascend into Heaven; or the garden wall.

The prophetic artist does not appear full-blown in his craft, and Gulley has gone through education and diseducation, passed from school to school and then on to Blake and into his own: "To hear from ravaged valleys start/Childish songs forgot by art." He tries to keep alive and out of jail, stuffs his rags with paper to keep the wind out and has at his walls and canvases for the sheer joy of it.

Professor Alabaster, the "art cricket," provides Gulley with a monument, "The Life and Works of Gulley Jimson," but the central position is given to his nude portraits of Sara, from his period closest to settlement; and his last wall, which has already been torn down when the book appears, is dismissed in a footnote. The rich—Hickson and the Beeders—keep Jimson alive for a bit, and Jimson's inflictions on them are monumental. Jimson eulogizes (there is an axe in it) and uses the rich, but they have their own interests. Gulley has a certain amount of fellow-feeling for the sculptor Abel who uses him using Beeder; but they work apart in separate rooms. Nosy, Gulley's ardent disciple, takes his master's advice in the long run and becomes a grocery clerk; a clerk devoted to Gulley, but a clerk after all. "The old horse doesn't speak only horse." Gulley leaves no dictionary.

While Gulley is doing his best to ward off the swats of organized respectability, Sara Monday keeps her old train going. She settles two more men, and is preparing to use one of Jimson's old drawings of herself in the nude (now in demand at the galleries) to provide herself with a final home. (She has, also, a personal attachment to the picture; it shows her herself in herself.) Gulley wants the picture back to provide himself with money to buy paints for his wall. In the course of trying to get it away, he murders Sara. The law doesn't get him for it, by an act of grace on Sara's part. But he is a little "unsettled." He has looked on her as materiality, "spirit-fodder," to be kept down and digested. But now she appears to him in a rather roseate vision (one can almost hear the organ) and says, "What for did you spoil all our happiness with your worrying over painting?" And he doesn't know, but goes on painting.

Although the book as a whole comes off, it has curious failings. The scene in Coker's bar which includes the magnificent bit about the cat, includes also a discussion of the impending war, of Hitler, of Chamberlain, of peace, that is worthy of Mrs. Miniver. There is the childish device of the footnote on p. 282 informing of Gulley's death. There is the sloppy vision of Sara, almost good enough to be followed by a singing commercial. Gulley's remarkable apocalyptic vision of his painted whale winking at him as the wall

collapses is followed by the funny-paper perception of "ten thousand angels . . . in bowlers." There is a remarkable mixture of wit and sadism, humanity and sentiment, prophecy and rant; at best the elements fuse in the mind's eye of Gulley Jimson; at worst it sounds like the Sunday comics with a strip by Blake.

Whatever clumsiness Joyce Cary may display, it is the awkwardness of overabundance, of an insufficient solution to the problem of limits, rather than any incapacity either of perception or articulation. In trying to get too much in he sometimes gets overly vehement; he relies too much on the grotesque; he talks too much. These defects disappear, almost miraculously, in his latest novel, *A Fearful Joy*, which gives us a more direct connection with English history from the 1880's through World War II than the trilogy does, and a remarkable insight into the barriers that get set up between generation and generation while the life process works its own way out of each. Through the life-span of its heroine, Tabitha Baskett, it proceeds in the third person and in the present tense—a rare device in English fiction, producing an effect of great immediacy, a sort of interpretative microphone on-the-spot—and remarks aptly on the articulation of her creative vehemence.

The "message" stated baldly (and therefore, since this is a blood-and-bones work of art, inadequately) is that "happiness must be contrived and maintained, among the alterations of time and the shifts of luck." Tabitha Baskett is a "normal" daughter of a "normal" small-town doctor. She is plain and stubborn; but she has imagination. A Victorian cad named Dick Bonser slips her a glib line and persuades her to run off with him; the story begins as a tale of seduction and "the downward path," and it has the cliché of Victorian melodrama as a backdrop for irony and depth. Far from going into decline and depravity, Tabitha becomes a pillar of strength; her power of moral coherence comes into full flower; she is a heroine of almost Tolstoyan proportions.

Cary has a gift of humanity—an artistic as well as (perhaps) a personal gift—that prevents him from (as Gulley Jimson put it) daubing a patch of cleverness over a piece of real understanding. His humor shows no traces of carrion under the fingernails. His prose, well modulated and controlled, finds no need to call attention to itself, but suffuses his perceptions with all the vitality of a language well used and hard thought over.

Bonser, the libertine, the cad, the overgrown, handsome, perpetual boy emerges as an outrageous, and yet a pathetic figure. There is Tabitha's vision of him in his last illness:

. . . While Dorothy and Tabitha, like two intelligent ants grappling with some vast stupid helpless prey, struggle to undress him and put him to bed, he waves his arms and cries, "Keep her out; keep them off me." What saves him from being a disgusting object . . . is the beautiful skin, smooth, soft, elastic and pink, which encloses this mass

of fat; a baby's skin on which no amount of debauchery has had any effect, which has survived to join his second childhood to his first, and seems to apologize even for his infantile terrors now, his silly deceits. And there is this sudden insight into the character of old Gollan—who marries Tabitha because he wants a hostess for his toy estate; who is, in fact, always and furiously, playing—after a particularly vulgar remark:

It is hard to say whether the tweed suit, the abrupt tone, and even the crudity of speech, new in the last year, are the arrogance of one who is really contemptuous of others, who is truly a vulgar soul, or an attitude meant to hide the profound boredom of an old man with everybody but one or two intimates, and everything but his private schemes and ambitions.

Even the surface-slimy Manklow, the opportunist editor, who watches for "openings" to "get his hook in" is given a certain warmth, a profound reality.

History—time and place as they impinge on the individual soul—is more successfully dealt with in *A Fearful Joy* than in the trilogy, where it seems to matter very little, actually, where and when the people are. There is a powerful sense of place. History in its textbook sense is more immediate here, too. The arty nineties, airplane building at the turn of the century, the First World War, the invasion of civilization by the automobile, these are dealt with always coherently, through the people participating in them, through art rather than history, but the more effectively for that. (One thinks oddly of Dos Passos' *U.S.A.* for contrast.) Hitler's fearsome radio speeches and much of the feeling of the pre-World War II era, even in the language that is spoken, permeate the last part of the book. There is a magnificent description of a Nazi youth deputation to England; a remarkable account of Tabitha dealing with refugees from the London blitz. The experience of time and place is made very real for each of the book's characters.

It is this experience that gives subtlety to the process we observe of people with imagination bringing order and sense into their lives. This process, crudely dealt with in the trilogy, here comes to wonderful life. Tabitha meets her brother Harry after a long separation. She has been a "wicked woman," but at the time she is rich and famous. Harry is her symbol for the safe and settled world she has left, her substitute for God. He laughs, "My smart little sister! . . . But there, you had the pluck to break loose and do what you liked." Tabitha is astonished. "But, Harry, that's just what I've never done." Tabitha's relations with her son John, and his wife and child are traced with exceeding finesse; his general assumption of her fixity (although she changes as subtly and rapidly as he); her incomprehension of his ambitions, her stunned observation of the bald spot that has seeped through his hair, her awareness suddenly that (as he puts it) he is not the great man she thought him:

The veil of rain drizzling past the white light of the lamp, its hiss and drip, seems to shut them into their private place of suspense, where there is nothing to do but reflect upon the world. . . .

John's funeral with the bus parked by the cemetery, its motor breathing hurry and its passengers snooping at the burial is powerfully done. Tabitha's first incomprehension of her granddaughter Nancy, so like her, and her later close comprehension, followed by separation, are made so startlingly clear that one feels like the theater yokel who wanted to leap onto the stage and explain. (In *To Be a Pilgrim*, Ann says to Tom Wilcher, "It's not that people were born with more sense in those days, but there seems to have been more sense going round. . . .") In *A Fearful Joy* Tabitha is shocked and annoyed by the thought that Nancy may compare the circumstances of her illegitimate child with those of Tabitha's:

. . . how mean, how unfair it would be to make such a reprisal upon her; as if the circumstances of her flight, as an innocent girl of high moral character, with Bonser, so handsome and seductive, so full of good sentiments, and this vulgar escapade of pure egotism and sensuality, with the ugly and cynical Parkin, were to be judged in the same light. . . .

Tabitha's final vision, a square child with squarely shorn hair, as vivid as Anna Karenina's vision of its opposite (the peasant who spoke French), is like Gulley's of the winking whale, a powerful affirmation of the life force. The book ends with Tabitha laughing.

There are some eccentric patterns in Cary's work as a whole, that may be worth pointing out in passing. People laugh—frequently they die laughing—but almost never weep. No one ever returns from a hospital alive. And death itself is almost always somehow casual, and usually unexpected; people die while others are not looking, or if they are, in a way that is barely noticed.

Joyce Cary is a novelist of powerful sensibility and fine discriminations. *A Fearful Joy* is crammed with almost as much life as the spacious institution of the novel can hold. Not the bones of life, but the horse itself, full of kick and vigor, with motions all its own, smooth and convincing.

Prophets of Renaissance

HUGH KENNER

PATRIA MIA, by *Ezra Pound*. Ralph Fletcher Seymour, Chicago. \$2.75.

MR. POUND'S ESSAY begins, "America, my country . . ." He writes—has always written—as an American, but as an American observing America with as little self-interest as may be. That is why he is supposed to be anti-American. The document confirming his present predicament asserts, over several learned signatures, that the defendant has been for forty years a voluntary expatriate: forty years, that is to say, of a priori madness: "his personality, always abnormal," the document continues. From within the maelstrom, one sees the man on the shore whirling and veering: a dithyrambic oceanographer.

The spectator's role is of all roles the least understood in a milieu of strident disputation. Only a year or so ago Wyndham Lewis, the great contemporary specialist in spectatorship, inspected America, according to his customary procedure, as one might a zone of uncatalogued monsters, advised us of the existence of a totally new intellectual mutation, and predicted the arrival (after, it is true, some decades of cultural deep freeze) of a civilization of rationally directed energies acknowledging all antecedents while committed to none and drawing, with the impartiality of modern painting and poetry, on the resources and perspectives of a dozen nationalisms. The result was exactly what one might have expected. No one sought to lay hold of the concept of "Cosmic Man," or noted that such a work as Mr. Pound's *Cantos* already articulated such a mode of consciousness. A dozen coteries either concluded that they were under attack or contrived to rejoice that some rival coterie was under attack. Amid the gratuitous moil *America and Cosmic Man* slipped from the in-print catalogues to the remainder bins. Another spectator bit the dust.

The accident of a manuscript 37 years mislaid now affords unexpected confirmation from one of Mr. Lewis' oldest allies. There is not much of the historical argument of *America and Cosmic Man* that one could expect Mr. Pound to underwrite, and the almost naïvely earnest advocacy of "the true artist" in *Patria Mia* would probably release Mr. Lewis' most ferocious professional guffaws. The main perception of the two men, spectators some third of a century apart, is however virtually identical: because they were looking at the same object. Mr. Pound (Anno 1913, aetat. 28) tells us, "The thesis I defend is: that America has a chance for Renaissance and that certain absurdities in the manners of American action are, after all, things of the surface and not of necessity the symptoms of sterility or even of fatal disease."

By Renaissance Mr. Pound meant exactly what Mr. Lewis means in noting, over thirty years later, that the lines of force that once ran out of London and Paris appear to be shifting their origin westward. Again Mr. Luce provides us, in his proclamation of an "American Century," with a useful set of cave-wall shadows. The simulacra eagerly cherished by the self-conscious avant-garde (*Time*, *PR*, *The New Yorker*, *Vogue*, *Flair*, the Ivy League; one world, it should be remembered, not six) invariably reproduce the genuine intellectual events of the time, but in two dimensions. There is neither discontinuity nor culture-lag. There is no gulf between the lowbrow and the highbrow, only a difference in penetration. Their foci of interest coexist. The real middlebrow is the determined highbrow. Thus the systematic incongruities of *Life* parody with neither comic nor lyric awareness the perspectives of *Finnegans Wake* and the *Cantos*; sophistication Winchell-style or Thurber-style scales *The Cocktail Party* down to a parlor game without consciousness of missing dimensions; and "Cosmic Man" is an epithet that Mr. Luce would gladly have applied to his image of America shouldering its manifest destiny, had not Mr. Lewis, tongue perhaps a little in cheek, assigned the term more inclusive connotations.

If Mr. Pound's Renaissance, then, seems after 37 years to have fulfilled itself only in the most bloated form, *The New Yorker* today's simulacrum of the Whistlerian acerbity and Jamesian elegance that is one of his coordinates, and Radio City a parody on the architectural boldness adumbrated for Mr. Pound in 1913 by the Metropolitan Tower, "white and very beautiful," which "dominates New York as the older towers dominate hill towns of Tuscany," yet that apparently comic collapse of promise does not necessarily expose the prophet as naïve. The cultural climate of a Renaissance is not necessarily so negated ("Did not the palaces of the Renaissance have an advertising value?" asks Mr. Pound; "Is it anything but normal that architecture should be the first to answer the summons?"). A Risorgimento for Mr. Pound as for Mr. Lewis is a specialists' creation. We are accustomed to imagine that "Culture" and "Vulgarity" are antithetical modes, despite the labor to which Mr. Eliot has lately gone to define the term "Culture" for us so as to include both *Four Quartets* and boiled cabbage cut into sections. We are accustomed to suppose that the artist "expresses" the life of his time in the sense of being himself its product; so super-cultivated art can emerge only from a milieu of supercultivation, and we must expunge Superman and the *Readers' Digest* alike before there can be any hope for us.

Mr. Pound, however, draws one of his usual skillful dissociations. If "Nine out of every ten Americans have sold their souls for a quotation,"

They are, nevertheless, ready, good humouredly, to recognize a man as a "heavy-weight" if he is reported to be expert in some "line" sufficiently far from their own. Thus many men engaged in commerce, in insurance, in the skilful and finer crafts present to the arts an attitude of indifference which is to the artist comfortable and charming. They like him, let us say, and they pardon him his vagaries. No artist can ask more.

The contact between the artist and those with whom he must, in the disposal of his work, have contact is, however, so disgusting that I would rather leave it unmentioned.

The implications of the latter paragraph have broadened enormously since 1913; pseudo-culture and "magazitis" today outstrip even the formulation offered on a later page:

And over all this there swells the appalling fungus of our "better magazines."

Throughout, it is a question not of popular ignorance or of popular indifference but of pseudo-artists and of a system of publishing control. The arts can thrive in the midst of densest popular ignorance. They can thrive, I suppose, despite any number of false priests and producers of commercial imitations, but in this latter case the nation will not know that the arts stay alive, and the sham will grow.

There comes a point, of course, after which potential artists themselves get taken in: "I remember that at twenty I should have counted it some honour to

have been printed in the 'Atlantic.' There are any number of young people in America who know no better." These confusions are no longer confined to the young. Excluding the inevitable percentage who coolly take stock and sell out, there is still probably a rising unlikelihood of today's undergraduate ever coming to doubt that it is an honor to be printed in *The New Yorker*.

The notion that a Renaissance grows from the bottom upward is promoted chiefly by those sections of the country that have known, and are desperate to maintain, an articulated coherent way of life. But as Wyndham Lewis saw (though to the delight of New England he made his points at the expense of the South) it is of the essence of a Renaissance that it makes some abrupt dislocation of a settled coherence, and the essence of the coming American Renaissance that it will function with unexampled speculative freedom. And in *Patria Mia* we read, "Another change that has not yet been realized fully is the decadence of New England and 'the South.' Once these divisions were a good two-thirds of the animal, and suddenly it is perceived that they are no more than the ears of some new monster that is almost unconscious of them." It seems possible for instance that Faulkner (whose component of diluted Dostoevsky is stressed by Lewis in *Men Without Art* in a manner not wholly unfair) will survive as a writer of *contes*, and that the huge creative power exhibited in Mr. Warren's new novel will throw the Southern vanguard into shadow and come to seem, despite Mr. Warren's obvious debt to his milieu, rather a dispensation than an inheritance. Mr. Warren has taken the leap into space and shown how to do something that has never been done before, and with the patent hard work of the three previous novels to instruct one, one need not ascribe this unpredictable mutation wholly or even chiefly to the—indeed enviably nourishing—traditions of the South.

Meanwhile, of course, it is those who do the more or less good work in "the style of the period" who suffer from what we see around us. We have had, and may continue to have our towering figures. We have had in these times Yeats, Joyce, Eliot and Pound; but if we have not had Marvell and Gays it is because they have been turned into Audens and Wolcott Gibbsses. Mr. Pound's practical proposals for averting such catastrophes—"divising the new castes, to wit, of professors who could meet a creative artist without being made to appear ridiculous, and of artists who could meet a decently informed professor without being shown for charlatans"—have in fact to some extent been put into effect since he wrote. What remains to be undertaken by the interested non-artists, besides the program of subsidy for which Mr. Pound argues, is simple. It involves abandonment of the notion that criticism and "books about" are themselves of the essence of a decent milieu. The function of the critic is that of showman. His job is to remove stumbling blocks in the way of the widest possible contact with the genuine work of his time. It is from the works of art and not from him that his audience should be expected to derive its

nutriment. This is not to deny that perceptions can be sharpened and guided. But they remain perceptions of things—poems, pictures, novels—particular perceptions not be confused with a mere subjective state of hypersensitive receptivity. Few centuries can boast as many great artists as can the present; but it is largely the stultifying rectitude of the serious magazines, their exaltation of “taste” as a way of life, that since at least the early days of *Harpers* and the *Atlantic* has made the minor artists no longer worth inspection. It is still the *Atlantic* that falls for Osbert Lancaster and the latest phase of Miss Sitwell.

The Isness of Lawrence

SEYMOUR KRIM

D. H. LAWRENCE: PORTRAIT OF A GENIUS, BUT . . . , by *Richard Aldington*. Duell, Sloan and Pearce. \$3.75.

MR. ALDINGTON's informal biography of D. H. Lawrence is not half so lively or penetrating as might have been expected from him. One did not look for a “definitive” or even respectable work from Mr. Aldington, but on the basis of past impertinences there was the hope that his frisky intelligence would dart in on Lawrence boldly, and bring us back some illuminations that would have been denied to a too-“balanced” or too-tame schoolmanish biographer. The sad fact is that Mr. Aldington has done nothing like this; his book is an unshaped and finally monotonous growth of day-to-day facts, unredeemed by wit, concision or deep contemplation of his subject. Had Mr. Aldington cut and compacted, put muscle and edge into his matter, there is little question that he would have turned out a more readable and incisive book. As it is, the result of his self-indulgence will cast this *D. H. Lawrence* on to that towering heap of notes that lie ready and waiting for the first-rate Lawrence biographer, as yet incubating.

This is not to say that Mr. Aldington's book is completely without value. It could hardly be that inasmuch as its author knew Lawrence fairly well and provides us with more first-hand material—sweaty and full of thorns—to add to that already set down by the Misses Carswell, Brett, Luhan, Corke, etc. It is all raw stuff, of course, which still awaits imaginative and judicious cooking, but it is to Mr. Aldington's book (as to the others) that our future biographer must go.

Putting aside Mr. Aldington for the moment—and concentrating on his fabulous subject—the over-all impression that we get of Lawrence from the present work is an affirmation of why we so often become bored or surfeited

by much of his fiction. A good case could be made that Lawrence's special "tuning" to existence did not ultimately make up for his lacks in the rest of the human scale; and as we read of his everyday life in Mr. Aldington's book these lacks are rammed home often enough to tell us the "why" of the failure of all of Lawrence's longer works—with the possible exception of *Sons and Lovers* and parts of *The Rainbow*. The word "failure" in this context should be read not as any for-the-ages judgment, but as a simple inability on Lawrence's part to sustain and develop his imaginative works so that they hold us throughout and give us the pleasure and/or illumination that we want out of a novel. In their parts, as in some of the short stories and in those almost Martianly fresh articles like "Men Must Work, and Women As Well" (which would have escaped most American readers were it not for Mrs. Trilling) Lawrence's unique contact with experience unavailable to the rest of us shines forth; but over the long haul, such as a novel (or a life), the uniqueness palls, repeats itself, demands and doesn't get sustenance from the meat-and-potatoes elements of narrative, character, and effective rendering. In Lawrence's work, as we see it now, one wishes he had been duller, more Maughamish, forced to find freedom within the law (like a bourgeois or a sonnet).

As Mr. Aldington points out—in an obvious, but pertinent remark—the effect of a work of art on society is indirect, gradual and enduring, while Lawrence, "the human bomb," wanted to do "it" all at once. Much as this may seem old hat to the reader who initially felt that about Lawrence, then proceeded to go the step further and find L.'s virtue in just his bombing, the remark takes on a certain inescapable meaning when looked at side by side with the life. One does not have to be Toscanini to agree that Lawrence's non-writing life, from his series of shrill relationships with women, then men, his spurts across half the face of the earth, adds up to Noise. But that in itself might be absorbable were the work itself sound-proofed in any way. The really significant waste, for future generations as for ourselves, seems to be that so much of the unfulfilled life is rawly present in the work, showing up more clearly by the minute as time moves away from Lawrence.

But is "fulfillment" the kind of thing we should look for in Lawrence? Didn't he always make fun of (and hate) jelled art, preferring the freshly-killed image to the refrigerated one, the vitality of Etruscan expression to the "petrified" neo-classicism of Greece (Etruscan design, remember, which had no defining lines and hence no Euclidean gratification)? In other words, perhaps we should accept the unfulfilled quality of the writing with the thought that they were the sheddings—to use Lawrence's word—of a rare bird whose true work lay elsewhere than in "art." But where else, then, except life?—and yet it is just in that quarter that Mr. Aldington's book has something disillusioning to say.

What from the distance of the mind (and the twenty years that have elapsed

since Lawrence's death) appears to have been an almost fairy-tale defiance of every modern dragon becomes, as we look at the facts, something that induces less respect. Not only does Mr. Aldington's report of Lawrence's behavior actually glut the reader with its relentless account of hysteria, childishness, willfulness, obstinacy, rave and rant. (All that is in the Schopenhauer sealed-genius tradition and even has its glamorous side when read in a book.) What is really saddening is the clear-cut evidence of intellectual dishonesty and lack of sane thought in Lawrence's pacifism during the first World War,—i.e. "I would like to kill a million Germans, two million"—and in his attitude toward *Rananim* (his paradisiacal community). Of the latter he once movingly wrote that it would work "if the world were not a dead fact, but a living body" (in a note to Lady Asquith); but all the poetry in the world seems beside the point when you stop to think that Lawrence seriously wanted his friends to build a small, hysterical Jerusalem with him.

It might be said that we should view Lawrence's calls to arms on sex, politics, etc., as the utterances of an inspired man with a need for absolute justice, take them at that, and not expect to find them practical in any Leninist sense. Yet Mr. Aldington's book makes plain that Lawrence was deadly serious about putting these things into action; unlike Shaw on the natural plane, and Blake on the metaphysical, he could not tolerate stepping out of life for a minute in order to anchor his ideals in "art"; and since a good part of his medium was holy politics, it seems fair that he should be held accountable for being an unmanly (that is, boyish, extravagant, irresponsible) prophet. One shudders to think of real-life people being led by Lawrence out of the wilderness; and, after all, that should be the test of a prophet.

Full-scale criticism of Lawrence almost seems cruel, however, because from a book like Mr. Aldington's one can sense how little he was in control of himself. And this review would be unjust if it did not point out that Aldington's biography, unsatisfactory as it is, also contains enough evidence to show why Lawrence was perhaps the most exciting phenomenon of his generation. It may have been the excitement of a pilotless airplane, but it bowled over all of his contemporaries and one still remembers the awe in Aldous Huxley's remark that Lawrence "was different in degree, not only in kind." Mr. Aldington tells us how Lawrence's charmed or bewitched personality wrung wonders out of the most ordinary kind of situation, flower-picking, cooking, looking at animals. (The best of his poetry is like this, too—uncannily fresh in dealing with canned-goods subjects, but short-breathed and near-sighted, a sort of parable of Spontaneity.)

It is in these escapes of sheer personality, one would think, rather than in his conscious ideas or accomplishments, that Lawrence will continue to fascinate us. One might say it is the difference between "is" and "does"; the "isness" of Lawrence was literally one in a million, and if categories aid, there seems to be little doubt that he was the greatest English literary personality since Byron.